

ALPHA

80p

MYSTERIES OF MIND & MATTER

No 8 May/June 1980



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* * *

The team of Matthew Manning, Charles Bullen and Win Wood has already made an impact with their highly successful venture into healing under the heading 'ONE-NESS'. At the March Aquarian Festival in London, theirs was without doubt the most colourful stand, decked to a professional standard to publicise both 'ONE-NESS' with Harmony Healing, and also The Institute of Psychic and Spiritual Technology. Colour was predominant, too, in the exciting range of literature of all sorts displayed for free distribution to visitors.

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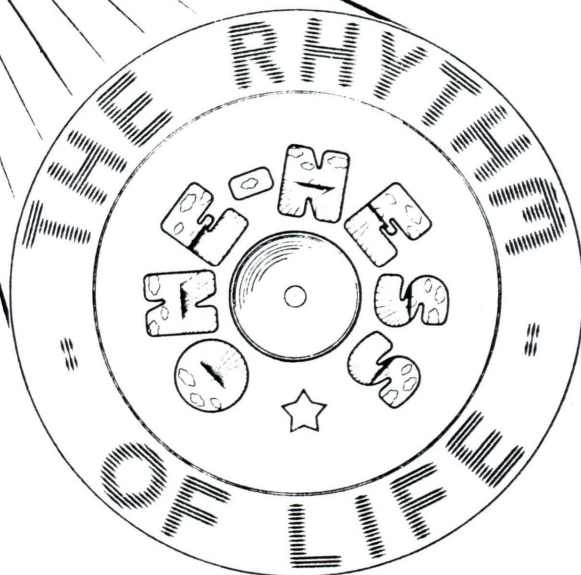
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May/June 1980

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Intuition brings success

WHAT is the difference between a successful leader and a person who has outstanding abilities but who never makes it to the top? The latter could lack intuition, according to Professor Eugene Jennings, who has written a study of leadership from the days of the Ancient Romans to modern times, *Anatomy of Leadership*.

A *Daily Telegraph* report from New York (April 23, 1980) says Prof Jennings has singled out President Jimmy Carter as suffering from this intuitive defect, which scientists call "maze dullness". "Jimmy Carter can analyse and break problems into parts, and his conclusions follow logically from premises," said the professor, "but he lacks the ability to synthesise the parts into a creative solution. He can take apart, but he cannot put together in a new orientation."

The newspaper account said that intuition cannot be taught. It is the ability to trust senses, hunches, feelings, said the professor. It is the basis of vision and creativity. It is vital to art, and more important to power than is logic.

This claim will come as no surprise to parapsychologists, some of whom — notably Professor Douglas Dean — have carried out surveys which indicate that many top businessmen rely on "executive ESP" when making decisions.

Saved by nightmare

A SPANISH chef was kept prisoner for ten days in a shed on the roof of a block of flats where he lived in Barcelona. The two men who broke into his flat forced him to sign 28 cheques, so that they could draw his £15,000 life savings from the bank gradually, before tying him up.

They also made him write a note "explaining" that he would be away for several weeks and they pushed this through the door of an 81-year-old widow, a woman he visited every day and the only other occupant of the flats at that time.

His captors told Rafael Perez that they would return and kill him, and that they would also kill the old woman, Isabel Casas, and ransack her flat.

But on the day he expected them to return, the police arrived instead . . . with an extraordinary story to tell. That morning Mrs Casas, who was virtually housebound, had managed to walk to the local police station. She announced that she had had a dream in which she saw her friend, Mr Perez, with his face "twisted in terror", and she had heard a voice say, "They are going to kill us."

The police dismissed it as just a nightmare. But when she told them she had not seen Mr Perez for ten days and showed them the note he had written, they investigated immediately. Their suspicions were aroused because the note had not been delivered until three days after he had last seen her, and it was odd that he had not called to explain why he was going away personally.

Having rescued the 56-year-old chef, and saved the lives of the two people concerned, the police waited for the would-be killers to return. They did so, and the police promptly arrested Manuel Mendez and Enrique Guerrero.

(Source: *Sunday Express*, May 4, 1980)

Future Tense

AS WE announced in the last issue, we shall be at this year's Festival for Mind Body and Spirit at Olympia (21 June to 29 June).

During the week, there will be an opportunity to discuss aspects of *Future Tense* and the way it was researched and put together with its author, Francis Kinsman.

He will be at the Alpha stand (E2) on Wednesday, 25 June. Naturally, he will be pleased to sign your copies of *Future Tense*.

Vehicle interference blamed on UFOs

MANY reports of unidentified flying objects contain statements that while the UFO was in view a car engine stalled, or its headlights and radio were put out of action. How significant are these sightings?

The British UFO Research Association has now published its vehicle Interference Project Report (£3.50, or £2.50 to BUFORA members) containing over 420 such cases reported during a 30-year period.

Although the study is vast, no one suggests that it is complete. BUFORA is appealing to ufologists around the world to notify them of sightings which have not been included. The Report deals only with cases in which the witnesses report physical or physiological effects, or where part of the car is put out of action.

At a later stage, the Project will also publish a Report of other sightings from vehicles where there has been no interference, as a comparison study.

Curses!

PENKILL CASTLE, Ayrshire, was once full of pre-Raphaelite treasures. It was inherited in 1946 by Evelyn May Courtney, "an ageing, vulnerable spinster", who allowed people to take advantage of her . . . and plunder her home.

The full story was told by the *Sunday Times* (April 20, 1980) in a special "Focus" feature. And hidden in the account was a rather curious story.

One of the characters involved in this tragic case was Walter Hume, a travelling grocer from Girvan. He persuaded Miss Boyd to sell Penkill Castle, its land, buildings and entire contents — less her personal effects and jewellery — to him and his wife for £5,000. They undertook, in return, to feed, clothe and care for Miss Boyd for the rest of her life . . . she was then 82.

A year later, Hume was attempting to sell a painting to a dealer. When he lifted the portrait from the wall the two men found an inscription: "Move not this picture. Let it be for love of those on high."

The dealer then told Hume that it was believed locally that a curse had been put on Penkill which would fall on anyone attempting to disturb it. Because of that, the dealer changed his mind and refused to buy the portrait.

"Bugger off, then," said Hume — and instantly collapsed and died of a heart attack.

Ears the news . . .

THE Chinese have gone one better than the Russians, who were claiming some years ago that some Soviet citizens could read with their fingertips. Chinese children, it is reported can read with their ears.

According to a *Sunday Express* report (March 23, 1980), most people treated the first such account in a provincial newspaper as a joke. But then reports began coming in from five other provinces until there were said to be at least 12 children with this strange ability.

"It was claimed that the children, some of them only eight years old, could recognise Chinese characters and several could even draw letters in the English alphabet after 'listening' to the folded paper."

Not surprisingly, there were many sceptics. But top scientists, including medical experts from the Chinese air force, agreed to examine the children and put their claims to the test.

Their findings, just announced, are that several of the children passed their tests. As a result, the newspaper discussion is no longer about whether they can do it, but *how* it is achieved. One suggestion is that their ears are capable of emitting micro-waves with which they can "read".

One of the publications which was originally hostile, *Guangming Daily*, reversed its position and declared: "The secret of 'reading by ears' is still not revealed scientifically. But the continuing reports will, perhaps, begin a new discussion."

Western sceptics will doubtless be unconvinced by these rather sketchy accounts. And the situation is not helped by an error at the start of the *Sunday Express* which perhaps gives the game away by misspelling Peking and Peeking!

. . . and ears some more

IN the same newspaper on the same day, another ear story (our *Fortean Times* colleagues will enjoy that coincidence). Mrs Isobel Kermath had suffered for six years with spinal arthritis which, despite drugs, caused her a great deal of pain.

But her back trouble is now a thing of the past . . . all because she went to a jeweller to have her



"Not again — sometimes I wish we never installed the wretched things!"

NEWS

ears pierced. "I was in pain when I arrived and when I left. But that night my back began to get easier. Each day the nagging got less and after a fortnight it had gone completely.

"That was about a month ago. Since then there hasn't been a twinge. I am mystified by it all but I am convinced that the day I paid £6 to have my ears pierced was the day I began to be cured."

The newspaper asked a member of the Medical Acupuncture Society if there could be a connection. He said that the ear can be crucial in the art of acupuncture and some schools work exclusively on the ear.

Calling all psychics

IS there a connection between psychic ability and time of birth? A preliminary study carried out by Arthur Mather suggests that there is, and he is anxious to receive more birth data from leading psychics to enable him to conduct a study in greater depth.

Mr Mather, together with Geoffrey Dean, is responsible for *Recent Advances*, an international collaborative project for "the

retrieval and review of findings in cosmic influence research".

If you are a psychic then please send your time, date and place of birth to Mr Mather (Monksilver, St Boniface Road, Ventnor, Isle of Wight, PO38 1PJ). He will be happy to send birthcharts (with a guide to interpretation) to everyone co-operating. It would be useful if he could have brief details of the commonest types of your psychic experiences, and times and places of outstanding experiences.

Is Mars to blame?

THE latest work by French psychologist Michel Gauquelin and his wife on astrological correlations and careers has appeared in the form of a book *The Spheres of Destiny: Your Personality and the Planets* (J.M. Dent & Sons, £6.95).

Gauquelin is not a believer in traditional astrology but an earlier study which he completed in 1953 revealed a definite link between the profession a person followed and the position of the planets at the hour of his or her birth.

In his subsequent research he has gone into greater detail about the traits which make up the

different personality profiles. His book is a do-it-yourself guide, enabling the reader to calculate, from the simple charts provided, which planets influence him, his family and friends... or enemies.

It's a pity that, in his explanation of how to use the charts (using the Queen's birth chart as a guide) Gauquelin makes an error which may cause some confusion. Nevertheless, it's a straightforward procedure, so long as the person being "done" was born naturally and not induced. Do today's hospitals, which bring about the arrival of our offspring to suit hospital timetables, realise that they are mucking about with our personality potentials?

Gauquelin writes with confidence and we are led to assume that his findings are beyond question. But that does not satisfy the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. It has put the Gauquelins' claim that sports stars are under the influence of Mars to the test — and found it wanting.

The CSICP has announced the findings of three "scientists/scholars" from three American

universities who examined the birth charts of 408 champion American athletes, including Muhammad Ali, Jack Nicklaus and Mark Spitz.

The study, published in *The Skeptical Inquirer* (Winter 1979-80), is co-authored by Paul Kurtz, professor of philosophy at the State University of New York at Buffalo; Marvin Zelen, professor of statistical science at Harvard University; and George Abell, professor of astronomy at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Their analysis shows that 55 of the athletes were born when Mars was in the two key sectors, according to the Gauquelins' method. This amounts to 13.5 per cent, which is considerably below the chance expectations of 16.7 per cent.

"We conclude," the three investigations report, "that the analysis of American sports champions shows no evidence of the Mars effect." The 44-page report also includes a reply to the Gauquelins, disputing the conclusions, and a final response from the investigating team, giving their replies.

PARAPSYCHOLOGY



Roy Stemman is the author of several books on various aspects of parapsychology and the paranormal. He is also co-editor of *Alpha*.

Strange influences

HAS the work of Dr Carl Sargent at Cambridge University brought us closer to an understanding of the workings of extra-sensory perception? Regular readers will know (*Alpha*, No. 6) that Dr Sargent has been experimenting with the ganzfeld state to induce ESP in subjects.

Half ping pong balls are placed over their eyes and a gentle hissing noise is fed to them through earphones. In this state of sensory deprivation they describe visual or auditory images, while an agent in another room is concentrating on a

picture chose at random. At the end of the session the subject is asked if he can identify the target picture from four which are presented to him.

These experiments have yielded impressive results, as Dr Sargent has reported in these columns. Other researchers, particularly in the United States, have had similar success.

Having satisfied himself that the ganzfeld state is a useful means of producing positive ESP results, Dr Sargent has been conducting various other experiments, together with his Cambridge colleagues, in an attempt to understand the nature of the phenomenon.

He presented two papers on his findings at the fourth international Society for Psychical Research conference in Brighton in April, revealing just what a complex subject is ESP and the whole field of psychic phenomena.

Dr Sargent reported that in one series of experiments, three experiments out of four recorded 11 target hits in 29 sessions, which is at the impressive 38% level at which ESP has been recorded at Cambridge in past experiments. However, the overall result was dragged down by the fourth experimenter, Trevor Harley, because in the tests he supervised there were *no* hits in 11 sessions.

That negative result is impressive in its own right, though in the circumstances it only served to cancel out the work of the others. Faced with this problem, Dr Sargent decided to stop Harley being the experimenter, except for an experiment which they have just been running at the ESP laboratory in an attempt to find out "what he is doing wrong". In that experiment his subjects have now started to score positively.

Ironically, the "experimenter effect" also raised its ugly head in another series of Cambridge tests, and this time it was Dr Sargent's influence which affected the results. In earlier work he had observed that the scoring rate improved with time during a session. But when a series of experiments was conducted to study this effect more positively, everyone else got reasonably good results... but not Carl Sargent. "I actually managed to suppress the finding that I most dearly wished to observe," he told the SPR conference. "This is a very strange experimenter effect, indeed."

Almost as an aside, during his paper, Dr Sargent referred to another observation that had been made during the Cambridge experiments. There appears to be a "nice positive relationship" between auditory imagery and

ESP, suggesting either that auditory imagery is a good index of a person's state of mind, or that information is actually transmitted to the subject through auditory imagery.

He cited a particularly striking case where a subject, lying in a ganzfeld state, suddenly announced with surprise: "A budgie chirped in the white noise. It ----- did! It's a parakeet. Another one!" The target picture proved to be a large exotic bird.

Cheating the ganzfeld

Not everyone gets impressive results with ganzfeld ESP experiments. The first study carried out by parapsychologists at Utrecht University was described at the conference by Brian Millar. After good initial results, the 10-session study settled down to non-significance. What was interesting about the Utrecht study was Millar's description of how he had been cheated.

A researcher and a friend came from Amsterdam to take part in the ganzfeld experiments and cheated deliberately to show that Millar's experimental set-up was not adequate. At one point during an experiment, when he was doing nothing, waiting for the subject's response, the agent told Millar he

PARAPSYCHOLOGY

needed to contact someone urgently. He was told he could not leave, but Millar allowed him to use a telephone.

The agent then rang through to a telephone in a room adjoining the ganzfeld laboratory, giving a code to the subject with a number of rings. In fact, this attempt to cheat did not succeed in affecting the results and the event was noted by Millar in his procedural variation sheet. "But supposing he had really scored well," Millar observed. "Would I have conveniently forgotten that? Yes, I would."

Still remote

Another psychic experiment which failed to produce positive results set out to test the claim of American researchers Puthoff and Targ that "remote viewing" is a common ability. Mary Rose Barrington described the aim of the experiment, which involved sending agents to various places chosen at random, while the subjects remained at Richmond, Surrey, trying to sense what the agents were seeing and hearing.

The 16 participants were divided into eight agent-subject pairs and the agents operated as a group. The results were not exciting, but the techniques used for organising this one-off attempt to replicate remote viewing, held on June 16 1979, were ingenious. The general quality of the responses was poor and not one subject came close to giving a description of what was seen.

Vanishing metal bender

For those who find papers about statistical findings and laboratory experiments difficult to digest in large amounts, there was welcome relief later on the first day of the conference when Julian Isaacs discussed his investigation of a Solihull poltergeist.

Isaacs, as *Alpha* readers will already know (Issue No. 7), is

working at Birmingham University on psychokinesis (PK) and has devised an instrument which detects small "mind over matter" effects in metal.

The subject around whom the poltergeist effects occur is Peter M, a 15-year-old who found he could bend metal paranormally after attending a lecture by Matthew Manning. Like Matthew, Peter M's psychic abilities emerged after he was troubled by poltergeist phenomena. Probably the most extraordinary aspect of these disturbances is the movement of furniture, particularly Peter's bed, while he is asleep in it.

Isaacs showed photographic reconstructions of some of these events, including one in which Peter was found asleep in bed on top of a wardrobe.

"I have personally heard a movement of furniture in Mrs M's bedroom whilst I was outside the door and when I knew that no one but myself was upstairs," said Isaacs.

Producing a variety of bent, bashed and contorted household items, the Birmingham researcher — who is a council member of the Society for Psychical Research — remarked that Peter's metal bending is spectacular. It is different to that of other subjects he has studied because it shows "a kind of maniacal ferocity".

Though the veracity of the poltergeist events depends largely on the testimony of Peter's mother and sister, his metal bending capabilities have been confirmed by Isaacs' equipment.

"He is a very strong metal bender," said Isaacs, "because only really strong metal benders succeed in turning my equipment off and on without touching it, and he did so. It's only happened about three times with me, with particularly strong subjects. He has also produced pulses on my equipment."

We first mentioned Peter in *Alpha* last year (Issue No. 5) when we reported that this unusual young man had apparently

disappeared from one place and reappeared in another — a phenomenon called teleportation.

Isaacs had told a London audience about the event and declared that the boy's sister had been outside a lavatory into which Peter had gone. She had heard a thump (which usually accompanies his disappearances) and on checking she found that he had vanished. It was impossible to get out of the window. He reappeared, with another thump, in his room 15 minutes later wearing different clothes.

Isaacs now admits that this particular incident is not as impressive as it first seemed. It transpires that Peter's sister was not outside the lavatory all the time. On another occasion, Peter apparently disappeared from a bathroom, in circumstances that are better attested.

"There's a possible loophole here, too," Isaacs told the SPR conference, "because one alleged teleportation occurred while I was at the M household. I don't know why — may be it was psi — but I immediately rushed upstairs, went into the bathroom and opened the door of the bottom cupboard and found Peter there, doubled up in a tiny space, with his eyes closed holding onto a pipe."

"Now, I thought that was evidence either of him teleporting back into a cupboard, or of his cheating. And the cheating hypothesis is extremely attractive superficially. But when I consulted Prof John Hasted about this, he said that some of the other teleporting people arrive back in cupboards. Also, when he visited the M household a teleportation event occurred and he opened the cupboard but Peter was not there. The boy turned up a few minutes later."

Where does Peter go to when (and if) he teleports? When he comes back he relates experiences of long periods of life as his super hero *alter ego* Quasar. "Clearly," says Isaacs with a smile, "the form of the Quasar sequences is

influenced by Peter's consumption of Marvel comics." Peter describes the Quasar sequences as "dreams" but he maintains that the teleportations are real.

Hospital ghost

The problem with such extraordinary reports is that the individuals involved need to be protected from the limelight — hence the anonymity which surrounds Peter and his family. Similar anonymity unfortunately cloaks the strange goings-on at a hospital somewhere in the south of England which were investigated by Chris Davidson and John Comley, and reported at the SPR conference.

On one occasion many members of staff smelt wood burning and a fire alert was raised, but nothing found. Then three members of staff felt a "presence" pass them in a corridor. They followed it down some stairs and into a small ward. One of the women present "saw" the form of a person laid out for a burial on a bed. The others could not see it but felt an "ice cold area" on the bed.

People's attitudes to paranormal events change with time. When Chris Davidson telephoned one of the nurses concerned, on the day before he presented his paper to the conference, she remarked: "I think we imagined a lot of it."

\$Half-a-million gift

MORE news about the \$½million grant for psychical research which aircraft tycoon James S. McDonnell has made (see last issue). The *Newsletter* of the American Society for Psychical Research reports that Mr McDonnell, chairman of the McDonnell Foundation, has made the gift to Washington University, St Louis, Missouri, to establish the McDonnell Laboratory for Psychical Research.

Dr Peter Phillips, Professor of Physics at the University, designated as Director

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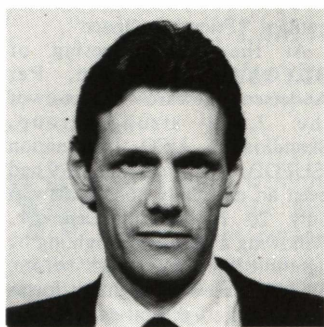
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UFO REPORT



Lionel Beer FRAS, a founding-member of British UFO Research Association in 1962, and a past chairman, is currently a director of BUFORA Ltd. He published *SPACELINK* magazine between 1967-71, and in 1979 ran the first UFO Study Course in London at Morley College.

1979 — AN AMAZING YEAR

NINETEEN seventy nine was certainly a significant year and put UK ufologists 'on the map'. The first UFO debate in the House of Lords, initiated by the Earl of Clancarty (popular author Brinsley Le Poer Trench) took place on 18th January, and attracted worldwide interest. In June the British UFO Research Association (BUFORA) had its first-ever speaker from New Zealand, Rocky Wood, who related details of the Kaikoura UFOs, and film taken in an Argosy aircraft on 31.12.78. A further bonus point was that the film cameraman, David Crockett, also attended the meeting.

The highly successful First London International UFO Congress, staged by BUFORA and Grand Metropolitan Hotels, at the end of August, attracted leading ufologists from 21 countries, including Dr Allen Hynek, Dr Leo Sprinkle and Dr Alain Esterle. The Congress saw the formation of an international working party to co-ordinate standards on classification and terminology and led to the establishment of the 'Provisional International Committee for UFO Research'. This body, being informally based, is unlikely to suffer from the problems of inter-group politics, and has the potential in due time to make a significant contribution to science.

The September issue of *ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS* carried 'mug-shots' of well-known British ufologists and commented generally, while *NEW SCIENTIST* referred to the subject in several issues, and carried the 'Cutty Sark' £1,000 prize-winning but controversial paper by UFO sceptic and NASA engineer, James Oberg.

The first full UFO Study Course to be held at an academic institute in London, started at Morley College, Lambeth, in the autumn, and was reported without bias on the BBC national television news.

Even arch-sceptic Patrick Moore got in on the act with his 'Sky At Night' programme on UFOs screened 11th and 15th December. Patrick admitted to putting a hoax report in the East Grinstead local paper, and claimed that 20 people wrote in to confirm the sighting.

Strangely, the number of reports in 1979 was considerably below average despite interest generated by the Spielberg film "Close Encounters of the Third Kind".

However, interesting reports came from many parts of the world including some from airline pilots, one of whom made an emergency landing at Valencia Airport in Southern Spain (see No. 6). The same issue mentioned the case of Franck Fontaine, 19, who disappeared for a week from near his Paris home, in the presence of a very bright light. Fuller details appear in *BUFORA JOURNAL* (BJ) Vol.9/2, and investigations have left some unresolved questions, due to some fickleness amongst the three witnesses.

Alarming Scottish Close Encounter

A MORE convincing case, worth relating in detail, occurred in Scotland on 9th November 1979. Minor UFO reports came from Bathgate, Easterhouse, Edinburgh, Uphall, Blairgowrie and Claddach on North Uist and elsewhere, on the 8th and 9th, some potentially explainable, some not.

The case of Robert Taylor, 61, of Livingston, near Edinburgh, was quite startling, even unique. There were minor errors in some of the press reports, and I am indebted to Stuart Campbell, BUFORA Regional Investigation Co-ordinator for Scotland, for the bulk of the details.

Stuart suggested that this could be a case of ball lightning and has given some reasoned arguments; however you can make up your own mind on this. Mr Taylor is a Scot, employed for 16 years by the Livingston Development Corporation, and currently working as a forestry foreman. Both work colleagues and neighbours testified to his phlegmatic disposition, sobriety and integrity. He left his corporation house at 10 am on the 9th in a Forestry Department van to inspect young forests close to the M8 Glasgow-Edinburgh Motorway, and was accompanied by his red setter dog.

It was a chilly damp 3°C with a

light wind from the southwest and recent sleet showers. Leaving the van on a forest track on Dechmont Hill, he proceeded on foot. About 10.15 am, at the junction of four tracks he rounded a corner and entered a small clearing. He was transfixed by the sight of a large ball-shaped object. It was about 20 feet across and hovered just above the ground. He did not notice any supports or landing gear. There was a downward projecting flange around its centre which carried verticle rod-like projections. Mr Taylor thought it had a uniformly dark-grey metallic colour with the texture of emery paper.

The UFO became partly transparent, first at one place, and then at another. He fancied that it was attempting to camouflage itself. After being rooted to the spot for some 30 seconds, two spherical, possibly robotic, objects like sea mines, appeared from behind the main object. They were much smaller and carried a number of projections. They rolled towards him on a horizontal axis very rapidly. As the legs or projections hit the ground a plopping sound was heard.

When the two 'mines' reached the witness, they attached a 'leg' to each side of his trousers, just below the pockets. At the same time he experienced a suffocating acrid smell, which was similar to burnt brake linings. He thought that his normally placid dog had barked furiously. He had felt himself falling onto his face and possibly being dragged towards the large object, but quickly lost consciousness.

When he regained his senses, an estimated 25 minutes later, his dog was with him, but the three strange objects had disappeared. He tried to speak to his dog but found his

voice had gone. Still dazed he attempted to get up but found his legs would not support him, so he crawled some 300 yards on his hands and knees. He then staggered the remaining 400 yards to his van.

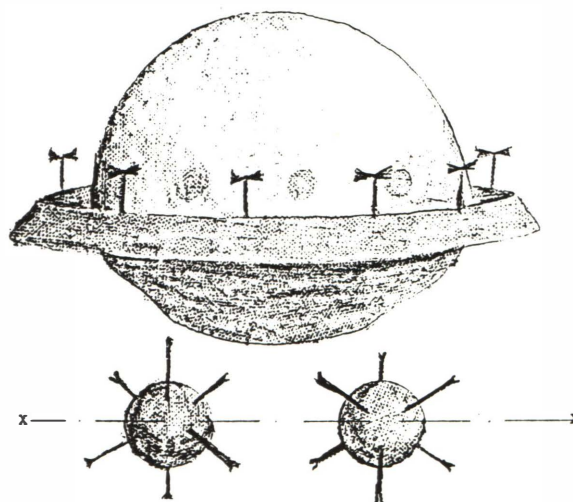
He tried to contact his headquarters by radio, but still could not speak. On trying to reverse his van, it promptly got stuck on soft ground, so he finally returned home on foot arriving at 11.30 am, after cutting across fields and woods. Although he had by then regained his voice, his wife was alarmed by his appearance.

A little later, he accompanied his supervisor, Malcolm Drummond, Head of the Forestry Department, back to the site.

There they found a short set of parallel caterpillar track marks, each of the two rows being encircled by a curving row of oblique holes in the soil, apparently where the main sphere had been hovering.

The police were called, and apparently found the engine of Mr Taylor's van running and the microphone on the floor. The Forestry Department quickly fenced off the traces on the gently sloping grassy ground, and a police constable made a diagram of them. Each rung of the caterpillar tracks in the grass was about a foot wide, an inch across and an inch deep. The 40 holes surrounding the row of rungs were tapered from about 4 inches at the top and had a consistent angle of about 30 degrees from the horizontal. The holes seemed to follow one after the other in respect of their direction and angle. A police forensic scientist examined Mr Taylor's clothing and noted that his longjohns had an S-shaped tear. This was consistent with a

Impressions of the robotic divices which attacked Robert Taylor, drawn from his descriptions.



UFO REPORT



Robert Taylor at the place where he collapsed.

graze on Mr Taylor's left outer thigh.

More interestingly, two small holes were found, one on each side of his heavy blue serge trousers, and the material was torn for several inches up both sides, consistent with being dragged or grabbed at. The tears did not start from the holes, and the scientist thought that the tears could have been caused by a strong mechanical jerk upwards. The attachment would have had to have been broader than a point source. It was thought unlikely that the tears were caused by catching on nails. The witnesses wristwatch was apparently unaffected by the encounter.

The whole case has been investigated in some depth, but its significance cannot be deduced at this time. Incidentally it was hoped that Mr Taylor could be persuaded to undergo hypnotic interrogation.

Identical sightings are few, although an eight-spoked ball, rolling on a horizontal axis, was seen by a 65-year old electrician in Germany in 1970, according to FSR Vol. 18/4. BJ Vol.9/1 mentions a small circle of light which appeared to have spokes coming from a small solid central light, seen in West Sussex on 10.10.78.

Other Reports

THE *Islington Gazette* of 23rd November, reported that a librarian, Marian O'Shea, 24, says she saw a glowing silver disc the size of a dustbin lid hovering in Arundel Square, North London.

She said, "It was saucer-shaped and made of bright glowing metal. It was so dazzling." It slowly moved down the middle of the road at eye-level before drifting upwards and away over roof-tops, all in a matter of 20 seconds.

The *Sunday Express* of 16th December reported a giant brilliantly lit UFO hovering over a

gasometer on the shores of the River Exe estuary. Grant Dixon, 12, said it was made up of thousands of the brightest lights he had ever seen, which flashed on and off in some sort of rotation. A second sighting was made at 6 am by Cyril Stanlake, 60, who said his car engine cut out. "I heard a strange humming noise and looked up to see a brightly coloured object like a dart moving across the sky at around 200 feet." It took him some while to restart his car.

La Prensa, newspaper of Lima, Peru, dated 18th January 80, reported that about 3,000 residents of the southern town of Palpa, had seen eight UFOs on 17th January. The objects remained stationary in a clear night sky and gave off spasmodic flashes of various coloured lights.

Russian Interest in NLOs

NLO is the Russian equivalent of UFO, and it seems that Soviet citizens are just as fascinated by reports of Yetis (or Almas), the Bermuda Triangle and UFOs and so on, as anyone in the West. Unfortunately these objects do not generally find favour with the scientific community, who have in recent years been at some pains to explain reports away in apparently rational and scientific terms.

Back in 1968, about the time that the iron curtain briefly lifted on UFOs, PRAVDA quoted the Director of Astronomy of the Soviet Academy of Sciences as saying that anything that flew over Soviet territory could not fail to be identified by the scientific or military authorities.

The western press seized on a more sophisticated theory published in *Zhurnalist* in 1979. This suggested that UFOs were zones of highly ionised air and dust particles, capable of adopting various hues, that is chemoluminescence! It was even

suggested that this hypothetical phenomenon could knock out an aircraft.

In 1979, *Soviet Ethnography* said that the idea of flying saucers being piloted by humanoids was a modernised version of folktales about encounters with devils, witches, goblins, water-sprites and so on.

This year the Soviet press stepped up its attack on saucer buffs. *Pravda* devoted half a page to debunking reports, and accused the western bourgeois press of sensationalising them. Such propaganda can be counter-productive, and "Joe Republic" remains naively unconvinced since it is difficult for him to obtain unbiased reading on UFOs.

My favourite Soviet quote, which probably dates back to the fifties goes something like, "Flying Saucers are an invention of western bourgeois leaders to take the minds of the workers off the hard lives they lead ..."

Recent Topics and Coming Events

LOOK NOW, a magazine for young women, carried an informative article on UFOs in its March 1980 issue.

The *TV TIMES* of 1-7 March, carried a mish-mash piece, by way of introduction to a play by Ray Hassett and John Ratzenberger,

entitled "Friends in Space".

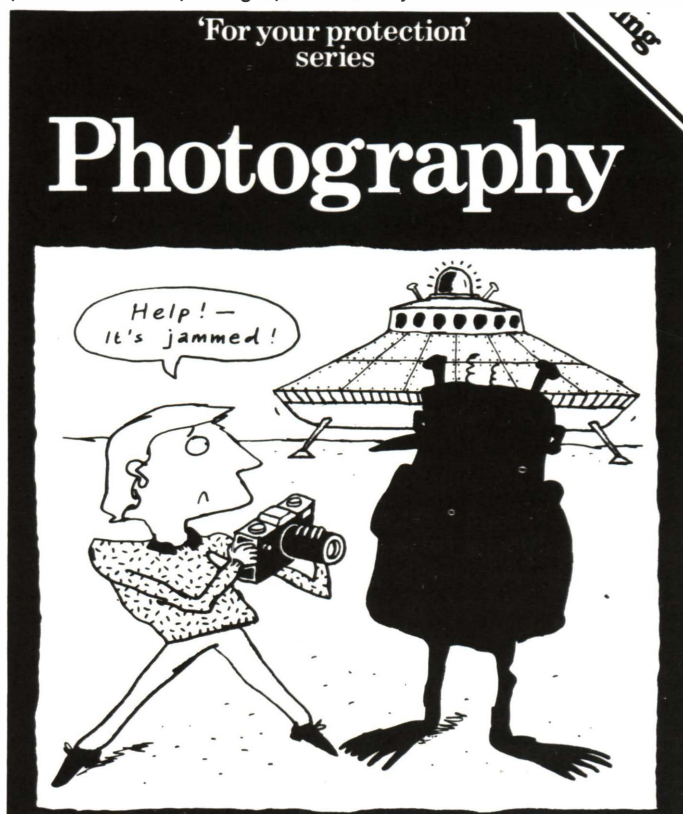
At the April meeting of BUFORA in London, Per Andersen, Research Director of the 2,500 strong group, Skandinavish UFO Information (SUFIO), confirmed that 1979 had been an unusually poor year with only 20 reports in Denmark. Following a significant sighting by lighthousemen two years before, SUFIO mailed out sighting forms to Danish lighthouses, so far without response.

They sent 200 questionnaires to scientists — over half in universities — asking for their views, and recommendations for proving or refuting the UFO problem.

From 1,000 computerised reports, SUFIO found that proportionally more UFOs were seen by building workers, housewives and young people, but surprisingly there was a lower proportion of sightings amongst agricultural workers and fishermen. Perhaps these latter workers are too 'earthy' to report any?

Also present at this meeting was Bjarne Hakansson from Stockholm, a computer consultant. He helps run PROJECT URD — a computer UFO reporting and data system, which operates a training programme for investigators from the Swedish groups for a nominal £15.

Cover of the Office of Fair Trading's code of practice for the photographic industry.



Can television tell it all?

Stewart Lamont, BBC producer, takes us behind the scenes of an adverturous TV series that breaks new ground with a notoriously controversial subject.

WHEN titles were being kicked around for the BBC television series on the paranormal which was shown first in Scotland in April-May I suggested "Out of Their Minds?" might think that those who produce psychic phenomena or witness them, do so because of some temporary or chronic distortion of their perception.

Second, I had come to believe most of the range of psychic phenomena (ghosts, seances, metal bending, poltergeists) can be linked to the state of mind of the agents who produced them, or the persons who witnessed them.

But the discussion about titles took place after we had filmed the series and long after I had first reflected on this twilight world of mind and matter for a book I was writing. So in a sense by asking the question about the link between mind and matter, I was assuming acceptance of psychic phenomena, whereas many people still require to be convinced that they exist.

In the end a much more fundamental and appropriate question became the title — "Is Anybody There?" (or in the case of certain programmes — "Is Anything There?") For basically what the series was trying to do was lay out the evidence for six areas of psychic phenomena, reflect a little upon them and leave the viewer to decide. The six are: poltergeists, ghosts, survival of death, reincarnation, clairvoyance and psychokinesis (mind over matter affects such as healing and metal bending).

Despite the strange nature of many of these subjects there is a large body of people who have some experience of them. It is said that 1 in 8 of the population have seen a ghost and an equally large number have attended a seance of some sort during their lives. Even the ultra-sceptical attitude of the *New Scientist* was fractured by a poll among its readers in 1969 in which only 3% said that psychic phenomena definitely did not exist.

Yet, when all possible explanations of frauds, delusions and mistakes have been exhausted there is still a great deal of evidence which cannot be explained away.

Trial by television is not usually meant as a compliment. It suggests "loading" the case in a rhetorical way. Or else it might mean that because it doesn't like talking heads, TV omits a great deal of necessary detail and argument (and psychic phenomena are strongest on verbal testimony *after* the events, which themselves are so rarely captured on permanent record). However, in making "Is Anybody There?" we were lucky on two counts, in two important areas.

The two areas in question were

poltergeists and metal bending. Both deal with *physical* effects that are measurable and therefore cannot be explained away as subjective delusion.

Either a poltergeist caused a flowerpot to shoot across the room — or someone flung it. Psychokinetic force bent the spoon as the teenage boy stroked it — or he gave it a twist when no one was looking. It's as simple as that. When the guillotine of Occam's Razor comes down on the day of judgment there are only two choices: one is trickery and the other is a genuine paranormal event. (Not all events are as clear cut as this. For instance, many of the "past lives" recalled under hypnosis could be long forgotten memories woven into the fabric of a wide-awake dream; or else the Spiritualist medium could be telepathically "tapping" her sitter's mind.)

The first programme featured the evidence for poltergeists. As well as verbal testimonies there were areas which are rare and powerful as evidence. The bulk of the film was shot at Enfield, North London, in February 1978, when a poltergeist was active in the home of the Hodgson family. The principal investigators claim that this case is one of the "classics of all time." Although newspaper and radio journalists visited the home, the film shot by David Martin and the BBC crew (plus myself) remains the only film record of the poltergeist while it was active.

It included:

- (1) film of the girls speaking in gruff "devil" voices which the investigators claim could not be ventriloquised for the long periods which the girls managed.
- (2) knocking on the wall (typical of poltergeist cases) occurred during the interviews between myself and the two teenage girls who appeared to be the focus of the poltergeist. All the family were under observation at the time.
- (3) Graham Morris, a freelance photographer, took several series of stills which shown the girls levitating in their bedroom. The camera was triggered remotely and took several pictures at 1/6th second intervals which show the girls rising into the air.

These rare photographs will undoubtedly be the subject of controversy (as are the "voices") but the range of poltergeist phenomena witnessed at Enfield add up to an impressive file of evidence. However, the question "Is Anybody There?" does not necessarily permit a simple YES.

The behaviour of a poltergeist — i.e. intelligent vandalism, throwing objects around a house and sometimes ingeniously hiding them — so often resembles the

pranks of the adolescents who are the "focus" of the activity that even if tricks can be eliminated as an explanation, the notion of a separate entity must be called into question. In other words, the poltergeist is a product of the child mind(s), a force which draws its personality from them.

The subject of metal bending is linked inextricably with Uri Geller, but Geller is linked inextricably with showbiz and performs his feats professionally, both of which make him less attractive to the investigator of the paranormal as they muddy the waters of motivation. How much better it would be if someone could replicate his feats without these motives being present.

Sixteen-year-old Stephen North of London did just that for our cameras. First, in the laboratory he produced signals on strain gauges by just holding his hands near them without touching. This effect has been video-filmed by Prof John Hasted at Birkbeck College but often, when outside media men turn up to film, the "shyness effect" comes into operation. Only when the camera is not running does the bending occur.

However, Garry Morrison, the gifted cameraman for our series, was able to establish a rapport with Stephen which yielded rare shots of him stroking a fork which behaved like plasticine in his hands. No one has suggested that the demons which are thought by some to be behind the poltergeist event are bending the cutlery. Both phenomena have physical effects of a similar (delinquent) nature. Thus "Is Anything There?" may be an appropriate question in both cases.

The area of psychical research which has most implications for our destiny, purpose and religious faith is survival of death. Improved resuscitation techniques in hospitals have increased the number of "near-death" patients who came back to tell the tale. They show a remarkable correspondence in their reports (experiences of a "being of light", going into a "tunnel" and looking down on their own body). This is thought to be a *prima facie* case for something existing independent of the body, which might be able to travel out of the body.

The next step is to look at the areas of evidence of survival. There are the composers (like Rosemary Brown) and artists (Luis Gasparetto) who compose in the style of dead masters yet in themselves do not apparently have the ability to produce such work. There are the mediums who can produce letters in languages unknown to them and messages from

people not known to be dead.

Yet they sometimes make mistakes or completely miss the mark. Why? Is the human factor imperfectly transmitting the information given to them by the dead — or is it just that the information was “dreamed” up by the medium in the first place and there are no spirits, just telepathic droplets of information, pooled together?

This would apply also to the area of reincarnation where the memory bank of an adult could so easily “dream-up” into a daytime fantasy the personality of a past life. For the television series I underwent a session of hypnotic “regression” and produced two “past lives”, one as a Viking chieftain and the other as an uncouth Scots farm labourer. The latter was able to speak in dialect in a way in which I can mimic in my waking moments, so why not when in trance?

Why not, indeed, for although I found the experience quite entertaining, I was not personally convinced that I was communicating a past life. My two *alter egos* did not supply any startling information about themselves and were rather too like aspects of my own personality — or so I was told by my friends. Thus were the waters of the collective unconscious, the theoretical ocean into which individual stream of thought flows, muddled for me even further.

What was needed was to reflect on the possible explanations and to match them to the phenomena which I had seen and those I had read about which were well authenticated. In many ways I found the medium of television inadequate to do this. Television documentaries illuminate areas of a subject and they entertain. By their nature they have to be selective and must exclude certain areas from being mentioned which would demand pictures to illustrate or accompany the spoken content.

The visual nature of the medium also means that what cannot be shown will have less prominence than something which has a photogenic side to it. Add to that the basic rule of any mass media presentation — namely that if the witness is dull his testimony is either excluded or edited severely. There is also the fact that a creative enterprise like making six documentary films of 30 minutes includes a series producer, a producer, two directors, a film cameraman and a crew of three, and a film editor, all adding, subtracting or modifying the material which the scriptwriter/presenter would like to put over to the audience.

It can result in an absurd situation in which you have 12 seconds to explain the problem of survival evidence in commentary which is laid over a shot of a medium sitting at a table. It may be that the specific evidence which she furnishes is detailed, lengthy, and even checks out. Yet a “talking-head” like this will be less preferred in the final assembly to film of a psychic artists in full flight, even though an assessment of his ambiguous evidence is

less easy. He *is* more entertaining.

To say all this is not to criticise any of the persons involved. They are right to insist that their programmes are polished and entertaining — that is why the rest of us watch them.

There is also another limiting factor in the medium of television and it is technical. (It provides the broadcaster with that all-excusing apologetic that something has had to be cancelled for “technical reasons”.) Nonetheless, it is a fact of television life that reels of film only hold ten minutes, that it is impossible to film beneath a certain level of lighting without special equipment; that the camera cannot suddenly spin round to cover something which happens in a corner of the room not covered by the brilliant lights. Psychic phenomena do not respect these foibles in the slightest.

Coming as I did to television after eight years as a BBC radio producer, I was only too aware of these limitations, for on radio you can speak about the most important things first (not the ones which have the most exciting pictures to “hold” the viewer.)

However, having said all that in praise of the Cinderella of the mass media, seeing is still believing. Television still wins hands down when it comes to portraying the intriguing wonders of the paranormal world. Its worth reflecting why there are not more television programmes on the subject. Could it be that the electronic tricks which are displayed to dazzling effect on “Top of the Pops”, would be too easy to employ and the audience would not be able to trust the integrity of what they were seeing, so television leaves well alone? Or is it the lobby against anything which smacks of the “occult”, influencing the TV moguls to regard psychic phenomena as a pornography of the mind?

I doubt if either explanation is correct, but it is worth noting that the ratio of paperbacks about a given subject on bookstalls to programmes on the same subject on the screen is nowhere so disparate as in the case of psychic phenomena. The 70s saw an explosion in paperbacks about the paranormal ranging from the ludicrous to the lucid. Yet, apart from the excellent “Leap in the Dark” series which dramatised historic cases, there was precious little in the way of documentary work to reflect the upsurge in public interest and in research findings.

Occasionally, “Nationwide” would venture into the field, but it was ironic that in 1978 it was easier to get money in the BBC to make a drama series (“The Omega Factor”) which gave a wierd and far-fetched picture of parapsychology, than to get money for documentaries which would explore some of the fascinating results being produced by mediums, metal benders and telepaths immersed in the ganzfeld.

In the first year of *Alpha*’s existence it amazed me how much of its material coincided with subjects which I had already researched and determined to film — and if the series is shown in England this winter on BBC network, readers will recognise

many familiar faces (John Cain, the Liverpool healer; Carl Sargent and the ganzfeld, Michael Bentine, Colin Wilson, etc).

Another limitation of both radio and television is that they are ephemeral. The video-cassette recorder (VCR) is rapidly changing this, but it is sad that once seen, even if not forgotten, a programme cannot be summoned back to have its content scrutinised unless it is repeated. Whereas it is more appropriate for the psychic detective to be able to re-scrutinise his clues before coming to any conclusion — rather than have them paraded before his eyes and ears at 16 frames per second of film or 15 inches per second of recording tape. A page can be summoned back rather more easily. That is what drove me into print — partly to cover more ground than the series had done, and in greater detail, and partly to work out in greater depth the questions (and answers) which had suggested themselves to me.

It would be a bold man or a foolish one who ventured definitive answers to psychic phenomena. The best that I can offer is a paradigm, and a rather old theory. The theory is that we are prevented from being able to assess the true essence or “form” of the world by the limitations of sequential time and the physical senses connected to the brain. Mind exists independent of both the physical senses and the tick-tock of our body clock: the pulse which tells us we are alive. That idea is hardly new and found favour among the Greeks. At least I can claim that the paradigm is relatively modern.

Imagine that the brain is like a coiled roll of film. Naively we might imagine that our memories are printed onto it photographically, and can be replayed when we need them. But what happens when we replay the picture of a loved one. We see them as something different than flesh and blood. The picture has been coloured by *value*, meaningful and moral. Thus, it is not a mechanical process but one which is influenced by factors that are outside bodily functions of space and time. The paranormal is not an interruption of these functions, or Natural Law. It is not a miracle.

I have just finished listening to a Mozart violin concerto. I end up awestruck not by the technical brilliance of the player, although I admire it, but by the essence of music.

When I look back over the rolls of film about the paranormal on the VCR, I am intrigued by the mechanics which go into making a film, fascinated by the peculiarities of the phenomena, but ultimately I am given a glimpse of something which TV Eye hath not seen nor clairaudient ear heard.

BBC 1 Scotland has just completed screening six films on aspects of the Paranormal, entitled, “Is Anybody There?” Stewart Lamont introduces the series. His book, with the same title will be published by Mainstream Publishing in June (price £6.50).

The Hexham heads

Ever since their recent discovery, the Hexham heads have puzzled — even terrified — researchers. Don Robins charts their history and discusses the possible origins and the werewolf spectre associated with them.

Some three or four years ago, when I became interested in the broad area of 'earth energy' and its relation to stone which was to develop eventually into my involvement with the Dragon Project (*Alpha 3*), I became aware of the idea, elusive yet insistent, of place memory and object memory.

These concepts have been discussed by many authors and experimenters, perhaps most notably by Lethbridge, and the basic tenet of the hypothesis may be briefly summarised by the conjecture that violent or dramatic events — sudden death from accident or battle for example — leave a record of their occurrence somehow impressed upon the fabric of the environment, whether it be a building or natural feature, or upon an object associated with the traumatic event.

On the face of it, such an idea does not seem to have much chance of standing up to scientific objectivity: it is well known that the descriptions of hauntings in terms of 'played-back' place or object memories, whilst now popular in some circles, are extremely difficult to put to the test in laboratory conditions, and the very concept of playing back invokes complex coding and decoding mechanisms for light and sound in a wide variety of materials that have not otherwise been identified.

However, whilst this basic scientific infrastructure is lacking, there is a widespread subjective feeling that some such emotional — environmental interaction is possible in the very description of atmosphere associated with many places. There are probably few who would not subscribe to this idea: the impression of a peaceful country churchyard, a grim castle keep or a spooky stone circle, even, more prosaically, the happy atmosphere of a house for sale that finally prompts purchase, or forbids it if absent — a factor well used by estate agents.

Underlying all these subjective impressions is the implicit assumption that previous occupants or owners have somehow affected the very fabric of a place.

As I became more involved in the considerations of energy storage and transduction in stone, I increasingly wondered about this phenomenon and the likelihood of establishing an energetic basis for its reality. It seemed that to do this it would be necessary to investigate a well-established case of 'playback', if possible viewing the phenomenon directly before any definite hypothesis could be put forward. It was at this point in my awakening interest that I chanced upon the

strange story of the two Hexham Heads.

Two Cult Heads

In 1971, Dr Anne Ross, a distinguished Celtic scholar and archaeologist at Southampton University, was asked to examine two Celtic cult heads that had been excavated in the garden of a house in Hexham, Northumberland. Dr Ross has described her reaction to these cult heads as one of instant and instinctive dislike, although she routinely stored them in the study with her collection of other Celtic heads to await geological and stylistic examination.

These carved stone heads are a common feature of other Celtic archaeology: they range in size from that of a tennis ball to larger than a football and often have recognisably Celtic features, such as distinctive hairstyles and sweeping moustaches. It is generally thought that these stone heads are symbolic of the Celtic passion for head-hunting, and that they possessed religious significance for the pagan Celts. The two stone heads in question were crudely carved, demonstrably Celtic in style and approximately tennis-ball size, and seemed to be carved from local Northumbrian stone.

Shortly after the heads had arrived and been stored, Dr Ross reported that she awoke suddenly one night at 2 am, feeling very frightened and cold. She saw that there was a large, tall figure, 'dark like a shadow', slipping from the bedroom into

The wolfman — a figure of folklore and legend.



A CYNOCEPHALE.

the corridor, and the figure appeared to be half man-half animal. Almost instinctively, she felt she had to follow it out into the corridor, and she did so, clearly hearing it go down the stairs, and seeing it move into the downstairs corridor leading into the kitchen. At that point, fear overcame her, and she returned to the bedroom, awakening her husband. Together, they searched the house but found no sign of any intruder and reluctantly decided, without conviction, that the phantom was the product of a nightmare.

Several days later, Anne Ross and her husband returned home in the evening from a meeting in London, having arranged that their teenage daughter would arrive home alone after school and await their return. They found her at home, visibly distressed and in a state of shock, and reluctant to tell them the reason for her discomfort. In the end, however, she had a horrifying tale to tell.

When she opened the door upon returning from school she had been confronted by something huge, dark and inhuman upon the stairs. It had rushed towards her but suddenly altered course to vault over the bannisters and landed in the corridor with an audible soft thud, such as an animal might make with thickly padded feet. The shape then ran towards her room, and at this she felt an irresistible urge to follow it, but she had seen it vanish at the door of her room. Several hours later, when her parents returned home, she was still unable to shake off the enormity of this event. Searching of the house, again, did not show any signs of an intruder, not that any signs were expected.

After this, there were several sightings of the creature, usually on the staircase, and always its progress down the stairs was interrupted half way when it vaulted over the bannisters to land with a soft thud of thickly padded feet in the corridor. On other occasions the family would hear these, by now familiar, paddings in the corridor, and observe doors fly open with no obvious reason.

Although this haunting — as they began to think of it — had started suddenly with the arrival of the two Hexham heads, there was no obvious connection between the two events. However, much to her amazement, Anne Ross learnt that a similar phantom had been seen in Hexham by the neighbour of the discoverers. She had been putting her child to bed when a terrifying creature — which she described as half man-half animal — came into the room from the corridor then turned and ran away. It certainly began to seem that the two events — the uncovering of the

heads and the appearance of the huge black creature — were linked, but in a way that defied explanation. The story, strange enough already, was, however, about to take an even stranger turn.

Ancient or Modern?

From her first inspection, Dr Ross had assigned the cult heads to pagan Celtic times, that is before about the time of the Roman occupation, and there seemed to be little doubt that they were at least 1500 years old, at least on archaeological grounds.

By association, therefore, it seemed likely that the phantom was linked to some dramatic event in the distant past, and much play was made of such connections in the sensational media coverage that followed Anne Ross' first accounts of the phenomenon. At this point, there was some confusion over what had been seen: whilst both Dr Ross and the Hexham witness concurred over the half animal-half human nature of the apparition and its overall human frame, Dr Ross described its head as wolf-like and the Hexham apparition was described as sheep-like.

Debate over this point and the whole incident was stopped in its tracks by an intervention of a Desmond Craigie from Hexham.² He claimed that he had made the heads in 1956 as toys for his daughter, and these had later been discarded, thrown into the garden of their house where they were found by two young brothers when they moved into the house some years later.

Mr Craigie said that there was nothing mysterious, occult or ancient about the heads — they were not made to any particular pattern, and had no significance other than as toys for his daughter. Rather than demolishing the whole incident, this disclaimer gave it a whole new dimension.

As Dr Ross was quick to point out, the age of the heads was not crucial to the appearance of the apparition, and furthermore, the stylistic features of these heads were so indisputably Celtic that it was highly unlikely that they could have been made without detailed reference to original designs. Craigie, however, emphatically denied this and was extremely disconcerted by the linking of the black phantom with his innocent toys.

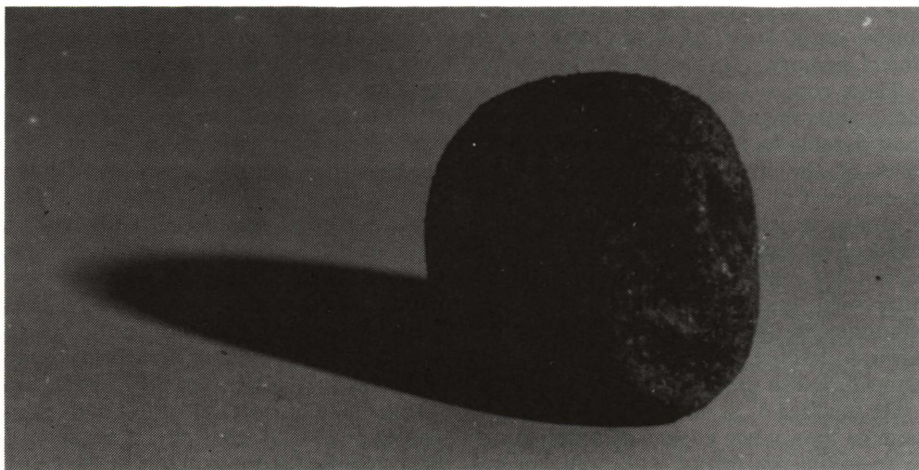
The rather heated debate that arose over the origin of the heads engendered one significant idea: perhaps the heads were modern and had not been made without some very close reference to Celtic originals for some undisclosed purpose? Added to this was Anne Ross' observation that removal of the heads did not remove the phantom, rather it seemed to 'lock-in' the phenomenon to the rest of her collection. Clearly, this was something that would repay further study.

The Quest for the Heads

It was with some trepidation that I began to consider searching for these heads so that the phenomenon could be examined at first hand. Despite the controversy that surrounded their origin, Anne Ross' emphatic account of the phantom seemed

so convincing that I decided to use the incident as a case study, and I therefore set about seeking the heads out. My search started in a rather roundabout way: early in 1977 I had written an article about the possibility of image encoding in stone and used the case of the Hexham heads to illustrate features of the problem, and this had provoked an interested response from Paul Devereux (editor of the *Ley Hunter* magazine, which published the article), and he contacted Anne Ross directly to verify some of the peculiar features I had discussed.

During their conversation, the whereabouts of the heads was raised, and



Dr Ross said that, as far as she knew, the heads had either been returned to the finders or were at Newcastle Museum. She reaffirmed the reality of her experiences and added the detail that the phenomenon had only ceased when her entire Celtic head collection was removed from her home.

Shortly afterwards, I began a direct correspondence with Dr Ross over the whereabouts of the heads. Much to my surprise, she wrote to me in the late summer of 1977 to say that the heads were, in fact, still in Southampton University, although not with her but in the keeping of Professor Hodson in the Geology Department. Apparently they had been returned to him from Newcastle some two years before, and they had lain neglected in a cardboard box ever since! Eventually we arranged that I should visit Dr Ross at Southampton University to examine the heads and also talk to her and Professor Hodson about them, since the latter had carried out some geological analysis on the material of the heads.

On 21st September 1977 I travelled to Southampton for the meeting, feeling very disturbed about the prospect of encountering the heads. I was aware, of course, that such an attitude was not at all conducive to dispassionate objectivity, but I was nevertheless prepared to keep all my options, subjective and objective, wide open.

One thought constantly on my mind during the journey was that while I started out from the standpoint that the phantom was some type of play-back phenomenon, I had increasingly come to wonder whether there was more to it than that. One possibility that hovered on the edge of my

awareness of related phenomena was that of the 'elemental' or 'guardian' that is sometimes associated with particular places or things, and this added a whole extra dimension to the simple concept of 'playback', one which far outstripped the tenuous links I had tried to retain with scientific objectivity in the whole pursuit of these heads. It also added a sinister undertone to the quest itself.

On arrival at the University, I met Professor Hodson first, and we began to discuss the heads. He was at pains to tell me that, as far as he was concerned, there seemed to be no basis for Dr. Ross' accounts of the phantom. In the two years

that he had had the heads in his possession, nothing had happened.

The main peculiarity of the heads, in his opinion, was the material of their construction: they were reputedly made of cement by Craigie, but spectrographic analysis indicated no sign of calcium silicate, the major component of cement.

Without any undue ceremony, Professor Hodson then produced a small cardboard box from a desk drawer and opened it, finally revealing the heads to me.

My first reaction was to be surprised at their smallness. They were roughly circular and somewhat less than a tennis ball in size. The two heads were crudely carved although quite different in appearance. One was skull-like with almost vestigial features for nose, mouth and eye sockets, although the top of the head showed striations which were typical of the Celtic tonsure. The other head was more expressive and detailed. While the skull faced head was vaguely masculine because of the tonsure, the other one was unquestionably female. The face was that of a wall-eyed, beak nosed hag again with distinctive Celtic tonsure. This head showed traces of pigmentation on the hair, and both had a similar overall appearance, a coarse texture and greyish-brown colour and they seemed to glisten with small quartz crystals.

Both heads, when placed on the desktop, sat squarely on smooth flat neck surfaces. This, however, was not their original form, since the necks had ended in cone-shaped tenons. Examination at Newcastle had proceeded by sawing off these tenons to give surfaces for petrographic analysis,

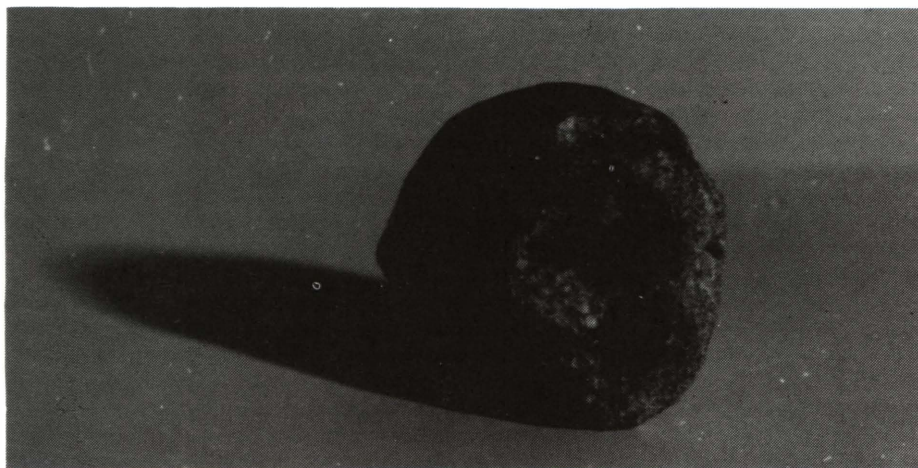
leaving the heads with a smooth surface. It is interesting to note that this tenon feature is also distinctly Celtic (probably related to the placing of heads in wall niches).

On handling, the heads were unexpectedly heavy and dense, and whether holding them or looking at them on the desk top, I did not feel at ease. My immediate impression was that the female head, the girl, was the one that disturbed me. Wherever the head was placed on the desk, one of the eyes seemed to be on me, and I only felt at ease when the head was turned around so that the eyes were facing directly away. Anne Ross then joined us, and during the rest of the day I discussed

offered the heads to examine on an indefinite basis, and whereas I had expected only to look at them and photograph them, I now found that my quest had succeeded rather too well, and it was with some trepidation (greater than I had at the outset of the quest) that I walked to my car with the heads in my briefcase wondering what would happen on the journey — and afterwards.

Experiences with the Heads

It may have been coincidental, but when I switched on the car ignition, all the dashboard electrics were dead, but after a moment's fiddling with the fuse box, I



the heads with her and Professor Hodson

Dr Ross reiterated the main features of the experience for me and added a number of points of detail concerning the size — over six feet tall — and the noisiness of the padding phantom. We discussed the appearance of the creature at length, and Dr Ross was emphatic over her description of the phantom as that of a man with a wolf's head.

There is obviously insufficient space in this article to go over all the ramifications of the werewolf myth, but two features may be highlighted that might account for this form rather than the hybrid beloved of horror-film makers: firstly, there is a record of such a creature in Northern myth called the *Wulver*.⁵

It is supposed to be a powerful and dangerous creature, well-disposed to man unless provoked, and it has been sighted several times in this century in the Shetlands. Secondly, there is the link with shamanistic figures wearing animal pelts, a human activity traceable from the Palaeolithic cave paintings through the Viking berserkers to the modern leopard men of African Secret Societies.

Placing the phantom in this context implied that modern construction of the heads could well be linked with such activities. Dr Ross added that the peculiar events that occurred when the heads were discovered by the two brothers in their garden certainly did not argue for the hypothesis of discarded toys, despite the continued attempts by Desmond Craigie to demonstrate their normality, some of which extended to making further copies of the skull-like 'boy' head.⁶

As our meeting came to an end, I was

began a fast and apprehensive journey back to London, which passed without mishap. That night, I kept the heads at the end of the garden after letting my animals (four cats and a German Shepherd) inspect them. The cats showed no reaction, but the dog immediately fastened his teeth on the heads, an action difficult to see any significance in!

I kept the heads at home for some two months, transferring them to college for another two months before I parted with them at the end of January 1978. During this time, nothing of any significance happened in terms of haunting. There were, however, a few incidents that were worthy of note.

On 10th November 1977 I arranged a photographic session at my home where electrophotography was tried on the heads. Even with very high currents, nothing was obtained from the heads, although, interestingly, a comparison with ordinary cement showed a much stronger picture. After this session I kept the heads in a garden shed, and a lot of the time I felt very disturbed by them, particularly by the stare of the wall-eyed hag, which seemed to be on me wherever I was.

In the middle of January 1978, I brought the heads into the house and set them up on a mantelpiece, again with no effect, and emboldened by the lack of success I set them up in the upstairs study one afternoon before going out, and as I left the room I 'invoked' them weakly, hoping, or fearing, that I might see the staircase apparition when I returned.

I had just left the house when I realised, to my horror, that I had left a book in the study and had to return for it. The day was

fresh and blustery, but when I re-entered the house, the atmosphere seemed close and very, very still. In the study the atmosphere seemed almost electric with a stifling breathless quality. Again I had the feeling that whatever was there was due to the hag, and that the skull head was unimportant. I left the house hurriedly, but experienced nothing else then or on my return.

Shortly after this rather unnerving experience, I arranged to lend the heads to Frank Hyde, an astrologer, so that he could study them. When I delivered them to him he offered to dowse them in my presence. I had some limited experience of dowsing, and also tried dowsing the heads with angle rods and a pendulum. A very strong reaction was obtained by both of us, and it soon became clear that the focus of the reaction, whatever it was, was the hag head, although all our dowsing responses were cut off when the heads were sheathed in copper.

Since handing the heads over to Frank Hyde — now over two years ago — I have been unable to obtain any information of his work with them. I had intended to carry out other tests on the material from which the heads were made, but these were never to be done. Shortly after delivering the heads, I heard from a mutual friend that Frank Hyde had been in an unpleasant car crash, but my every attempt to contact him for further information has been unsuccessful. During this time I have begun to feel that the heads have perhaps moved on in a way reminiscent of Tolkien's ring, and that however long I would have kept them, I would have experienced nothing other than the occasional sense of unease and disquiet.

There is no tidy ending or explanation to this story. The question of the heads' construction is still equivocal, although I personally felt that the veracity of Anne Ross' experience was beyond reasonable doubt. A number of factors in the 'haunting' seem to be common to other more prosaic encounters with apparitions: the appearance in the bedroom, the association of the spectre with stairs, the feeling of intense cold on manifestation, and the sense of atmosphere associated with the heads themselves.

Much could be written of the energetics of these phenomena in relation to manifestation and 'playback', although it falls outside the scope of this article, but I am still left wondering whether there is another deep, and more sinister, dimension to the whole affair.

1. Described in 'Folklore, Myths & Legends of Britain,' Readers Digest 1973

2. Paul Screeton, 'Heads and Tales' The Ley Hunter, No. 77 (1977)

3. Don Robins 'Images in Stone' Pt 1 The Ley Hunter No 76 (1977), Part 2 *ibid* No 77 (1977)

4. Janet and Colin Bord, 'The Secret Country' Elek 1976

5. Katherine Briggs 'A Dictionary of Fairies' Allen Lane 1976

6. A full account of the 'Hexham Heads' story is being written by Paul Screeton, and interested readers should contact him directly at 5, Egton Drive, Seaton Carew, Cleveland, if they wish to order one of the monographs.

For gullible sceptics?

Carl Sargent takes a closer look at arch-sceptic Professor Hansel's new book on parapsychology and evaluates his treatment of the subject.

AS THE title indicates much of this book is a re-hash of Hansel's 1966 book written with a delightfully idiosyncratic disregard for almost all the criticisms made of that earlier effort. The Prometheus Press ought to be prosecuted under the Trades Description Act; this book, they claim, is 'comprehensive', 'dispassionate' and 'exhaustive'.

As for the other spiel, roughly one-third of the experimental papers in parapsychology's leading Journal (of the American Society for Psychical Research) in the 1970's were penned by one or more of the following: John Palmer, Rex Stanford, William Braud. Not one of them is ever mentioned in this book.

Since Hansel's grasp of the literature on mediumship is so frail that Alan Gauld, a very sober and quiet man, was driven to comment that part of Hansel's writings about Mrs Piper were 'nonsense' (this in the 1966 book, and the text is not much altered now), I shall restrict myself to comments on his experimental work.

First, I shall extol some virtues of the author and his book. Hansel is not a sceptic who indulges in scurrilous defamation of parapsychologists living or dead (apart from a disgraceful reference to Edmund Gurney's 'suicide', when Hansel knows perfectly well that the inquest verdict was accidental death; this will mislead readers). He has also exposed some weaknesses in the experimental literature, such as the Pearce-Pratt experiment's shortcomings, and this is all to the good. Problems arise firstly because Hansel's scepticism knows no limits and anything — even experimenter conspiracy — is a fair alternative to the psi hypothesis, and second because his grasp of the experimental literature is poor. Let me document some examples.

After the publication of his *ESP: A Scientific Evaluation* in 1966 Hansel got a tremendous amount of stick for his assertion that one should assume that psi was impossible when examining the evidence. In this book he claims that such an assumption should be made provisionally and would have to be given up if, for example, Geller was repeatedly successful in PK experiments run by sceptics.

But this won't do. Either something is impossible or it isn't. If one assumes that it is then logically it cannot happen and no evidence could prove that it does happen, and that's that. Geller's success would have to be put down to other factors than PK if one was being logical. What Hansel would have to say is that psi is *extremely unlikely*, highly improbable; but if that is the

working assumption then his case largely falls to the ground.

Hansel shows hopeless philosophical muddlement, and in any case can we really trust a psychologist who states categorically that "ESP can only be possible if there are new and at present unknown (*tautology rules OK?*), processes and properties of matter that permit it to take place"? There are many physicists who would argue with that and certainly the issue is not settled. History is littered with examples of foolish people who asserted that certain things could not happen because they were not reconcilable with the physics of the time. And I would suggest that it's not for psychologists to start making assertions about the physics of matter.

When assessing experimental evidence, Hansel broadly divides psi studies into two classes: alleged 'definitive experiments', which are treated as one-offs, and other experiments which might be repeatable in nature (for example, group experiments studying relationships between ESP and some other factor, like extraversion). His priorities are truly bizarre here.

Nineteen pages are given over to the Jones Boys, who were never exactly feted by parapsychologists generally, and yet PK experiments (other than Geller and Schmidt's work) and the group experiments between them get a pitifully inadequate 14 pages. Since there are nearly 40 published reports on ESP and extraversion alone this is absurd.

Hansel's reporting of the work on the relationship between ESP and belief in it (the 'sheep-goat effect') is feeble; he plays his usual old trick of discussing the original work (not mentioning Christopher Scott's wholly abortive attack on it), plus a couple of failures to replicate (one of which wasn't actually) and not one of the many successful replications.

He plays exactly the same trick when it comes to Betty Humphrey's work on expansiveness (a personality trait, a mixture of extraversion and low neuroticism, reflected in drawing style) — he references West's failure to replicate, but not the Kathamani and Rao experiment which gave results close to Humphrey's own. Now this is poor stuff; in the whole of this book only one successful replication study is mentioned at all. When one considers that there are over 30 successful replications of the extraversion/ESP effect and the sheep-goat effect alone — and not a single published study which significantly refutes either findings — Hansel's reporting is clearly not the legitimate writing-with-a-slant but the much more

dubious selection of evidence consistent with his ideas to the exclusion of all else.

Possibly the nadir of the book is the discussion of the experiments with Stepanek, and the reporting of Schmidt's work on electronic PK. Hansel's 1966 discussion of Stepanek was massacred by Pratt in 1973, who demonstrated nine gross errors in just 22 lines of Hansel's text; Hansel has never replied to Pratt and Pratt's paper is not referenced here either. Instead Hansel reiterates some criticisms refuted by Pratt and, even worse, he states that in the experiments he discusses Pratt was always present. He stresses the need for other experimenters to have been used instead — and he should know perfectly well that many other experimenters tested Stepanek with success (including Beloff, who obtained results significantly below chance with Stepanek — Hansel claims that this is a 'failure'). This is wickedly misleading.

On the Schmidt side, Hansel lets fly; he states that he may just have been "a careless experimenter who had little idea of the precautions necessary in an ESP experiment". Unfortunately this rebounds on Hansel. In addition to getting his figures wrong in places, Hansel seems genuinely unaware of a key feature of some of Schmidt's work.

In some experiments Schmidt asked subjects either to aim low or to aim high in PK tests recorded in his absence. Hansel seems to believe — and the casual reader will surely believe — that subjects simply told Schmidt later which trials were run under which condition. In fact separate recording systems were used for the two-aim techniques so that subjects could not cheat here. Hansel also fails to mention that in the early work the subjects scored slightly higher in Schmidt's presence than in his absence, again not supporting any idea that they cheated. At a tangent, when discussing the Heymans' and others' experiment with the subject Van Dam, Hansel goes one better than this. He actually states that the subject scored better when the experimenters (who knew the targets and who could have given Van Dam sensory cues) were in the room with him, rather than outside it when exactly the reverse is the case! Typical.

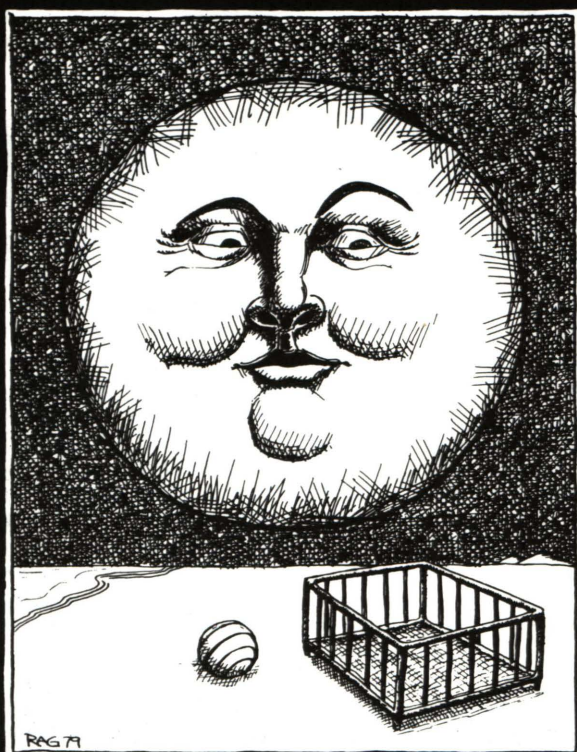
This book is a minor irritant because one knows that ignorant, sceptically inclined people will be all too ready to read it, believe it all, and say 'Hear, Hear!' simply because it's what they want to read.

ESP AND PARAPSYCHOLOGY: A Critical Re-evaluation by C. E. M. Hansel, New York, Prometheus Books 1980, \$15.95.

Prejudice and the paranormal

The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal sets itself up as an unbiased arbiter of the truth. This Alpha investigation takes a closer look at its record and background.

the **Skeptical Inquirer** THE ZETETIC



The Moon and the Maternity Ward

Good-bye to Biorhythms / Foiling
a "Cold Reading" / Students and the
Paranormal / High Sorcery in Colombia

Published by the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal
VOL. III NO. 4 SUMMER 1979

ONE OF the least attractive aspects of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal is the fervour it induces in some of its supporters. "It is my opinion," writes Gary P. Posner of Maryland Hospital, Baltimore, "that much of the irrational behaviour of many paranormalists may be more compatible with a diagnosis of ambulatory

schizophrenia (or a close cousin thereof) than with mere naivete."

Other readers of the CSICP's journal the *Skeptical Inquirer*, agreed. John Speyrer was not so coy as the earlier correspondent, but used more basic, non-clinical terms. "Dr Posner's letter in the Winter 1978 issue in which he contends that paranormalists are in many cases not naive but actually mentally ill is in complete

accord with the theories of other mental health practitioners." (SI Summer 1979) Corrective treatment for those who are not right-minded sceptics is, one assumes, the only logical remedy.

Admittedly, not every issue of the *Skeptical Inquirer* impugns the sanity of those who are engaged in paranormal research, but many people have got the impression that it goes about its work with the zeal of an inquisition.

Even the *New Scientist*, which takes a strait-laced view of the paranormal felt moved to point out that the committee does seem to go over the top at times.

The committee's main claim to pontificate on a wide range of subjects is that it is carrying the banner for science and reason: 'pseudoscience' is one of the labels it loves to slap on everything from biorhythms and astrology to any other theory it finds offensive. In many cases, its targets are fair game. There is demolition work to be done: some claims and theories are demonstrably wrong and misleading. But demolition is all the Committee seems to specialise in. What is more, many of its exposes are carried out with the kind of relish you would expect of an executioner who loves his work. The CSICP's scope is certainly wide ranging. But on certain experimental work and particular subjects, such as healing, it is silent, except of course for those cases it can readily dispose of.

Just how sceptical is the committee? In CSICP chairman Paul Kurtz's words "some Fellows and Scientific Consultants on our Committee . . . believe it is all 'balderdash'" — he was writing about parapsychology (SI Fall 78). One begins to see what the CSICP means by 'sceptical'.

Judging from the pronouncements of the majority of the contributors to the *Skeptical Inquirer*, the term in the popular sense of open-minded doubting, seems barely tenable.

There is also a curious proprietorial attitude about the committee's stand on research. "We reiterate that, though often skeptical, we nevertheless remain open to further cooperative work with those doing serious scientific research" (SE Fall 1978). Apparently scientists are not able to get on with research in this area unless the CSICP is looking over their shoulders. Which, of course, is absurd. Replication of results by other experimenters at other times remains the most useful means of validation. Science has its own in-built checks and balances. What makes the committee so competent to review this work? As Paul Kurtz disarmingly admits, it is hardly the bastion of unbiased appraisal. Magicians, psychologists, philosophers and writers far

outnumber physicists and other nuts-and-bolts scientists. In fact, out of the 37 fellows of the committee, there seem to be only two, a chemist and a physicist.

Nor, in the opinion of Peter A. Sturrock, Prof of Space Science and Astrophysics, Stanford University, is the *Skeptical Inquirer's* standard of reporting like that of other journals.

He complains in a letter (SI Winter 1978) that "An innocent reader may well be bewildered by what purports to be a 'review' of a scientific report (which is quite unlike any review one will find in any reputable journal), undertaken on behalf of an ostensibly 'scientific' committee, namely the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal."

Prof Sturrock was not happy about his treatment, particularly that the writer of the review, Philip Klass "obtained possession of copies of private correspondence without the knowledge or permission of the parties to the correspondence". His letter ends with the conclusion that Klass's "goals and methods are primarily political". It is a point to bear well in mind when looking at the origins of the committee and the allegiances of some of its key figures.

As the back cover of the *Skeptical Inquirer* used to proclaim, the CSICP was "originally sponsored by the American Humanist Association" (IS Fall 1978) and the close links were explicit: Paul Kurtz, CSICP chairman, is described as "editor-in-chief, *The Humanist*"; the committee's executive director is also credited as Executive Editor, *The Humanist*.

Paul Kurtz is one of the founding members of the CSICP, formed in April 1976. James Randi, described as the committee's "principal investigator" in an interview published by *Omni* (April 1980), is another.

Why the Association should want to sponsor the CSICP — its first meeting was held on AHA ground — becomes clearer when the preoccupations of the Association are more closely examined.

It was back in 1933 when the original American Humanist Association was formed. Its first manifesto was signed by 34 "liberal humanists". Its second, edited by Paul Kurtz, professor of philosophy at the State University of New York, was signed by 114 "individuals of prominence and distinction". Both looked forward to the overthrow of the capitalist system and the establishment of a collective. The AHA has about 5,000 members, many of whom hold important posts in key American universities and on key scientific publications.

In the association's magazine, *The Humanist*, the philosophies of Marxism and materialism have been extensively aired: the two are natural stablemates.

In the fifties, *The Humanist* attacked a wide range of ideas and values: American nationalism, American foreign policy, the image of man, American tradition, creative thinking, and the World Council of Churches. Both the ethics and religions of

democracy came under fire as did individuality (as opposed to the collective).

The Humanist has also published articles attacking notions of a non-material dimension to life, consciousness and non-material philosophy, extra-sensory perception as well as implying that Dr J.B. Rhine's experiments and findings were the results of mental derangement¹.

The tenor of its articles has remained substantially the same over the years and the underlying thrust of the AHA was made clear by an article published in 1969 by Kurtz, "A Marxist-non-Marxist Dialogue"², in which Marxist materialism was equated with humanism, following the "rediscovery" of Marxist-Leninist doctrine as humanism within the Soviet Union.

A prominent figure behind the AHA has been Corliss Lamont, the son of wealthy banker Thomas William Lamont, who used his inheritance to belabour the system that had given it to him.

Lamont's admiration for the Soviet Union goes back to his early days. He visited the country several times in the 1930s and wrote that "In the history of the race there have been many new worlds. America, for example, was once such a world. But the new world of the twentieth century is the Soviet Union and no one who is seriously interested in the progress of the human spirit can afford to miss it."

By 1944, the House Special Committee on Un-American Activities described Lamont as "probably the most persistent propagandist for the Soviet Union to be found anywhere in the United States. No matter what the fluctuation of Soviet foreign policy, and no matter what the corresponding shifts in the line of the communist party, Lamont has been found for many years a subservient fellow traveller of the communists." In 1956, the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee included Lamont's name on its list of the 82 most active sponsors of communist front organisations.

In 1957, Lamont published a book, *The Philosophy of Humanism*, which laid out his thinking and philosophy in detail. This was followed by a symposium for the discussion of his ideas: "In my opinion Humanism must reject the following 18 categories as ultimates of existence: 1) Mind (reason, consciousness), 2) Idea, 3) Truth, 4) Spirit (soul), 5) personality, 6) Will, 7) Purpose, 8) Love, 9) Good (Value, Morality), 10) Evil, 11) God, 12) Devil (Satan), 13) Beauty, 14) Freedom, 15) Life, 16 First Cause, and 17) Space and 18) Time."³

That his views are much respected by the AHA was made public when he received the Humanist of the Year Award in 1977. During the presentation, Lamont took the opportunity of urging Humanist groups to fight the upsurge of "religious supernaturalism and various occult groups".

Given its antecedents, it is not surprising that one of the first things the CSICP did when it was formed was to decry widespread public acceptance of psychic phenomena and call upon the media to

stop giving the subject favourable publicity. But a complaint filed in 1978 with the Federal Communications Commission that NBC's programme "Exploring the Unknown" was one-sided in its presentation of psychic phenomena was rejected.

Now to the *Omni* interview with Randi and some light relief. To be sure, he is a brilliant magician, a "professional charlatan" as he is proud to describe himself. But should he allow himself to be deceived into playing the all-knowing guru as well?

"*Omni*: Is the universe totally rational? Could there be phenomena that are inherently unapproachable by science? *Randi*: Well, I do think that the universe is entirely rational . . . " Gee, Mr Randi, can you tell us if you believe that a photon can really be a wave and a particle at the same time? We know that *Omni* is "the magazine of science fact, fiction and fantasy", but the line needs to be drawn a little more carefully.

It is not a gratuitous swipe at Randi who was, after all, invited to give his opinion. But the question is, why should his opinion be worth any more than the next magician's on matters of science? Is his view, and that of other members of the CSICP's committee, really more valuable than the scientists who have reached different conclusions on the paranormal? Or do they simply represent another viewpoint? Which, of course, they are quite at liberty to express.

Randi's speciality is to show how so many psychic phenomena, spoon bending, psychic surgery and so on, can be duplicated by sleight of hand. He has also tested many claimants, about 320 according to the *Omni* piece, without producing positive results. On his experience, he bases his beliefs.

However, other experimental evidence has suggested that there are grounds for believing in the reality of such phenomena as ESP. You can pay your money and take your choice as to whom you want to believe: preferably on the basis of the evidence rather than the rhetoric that supports the case.

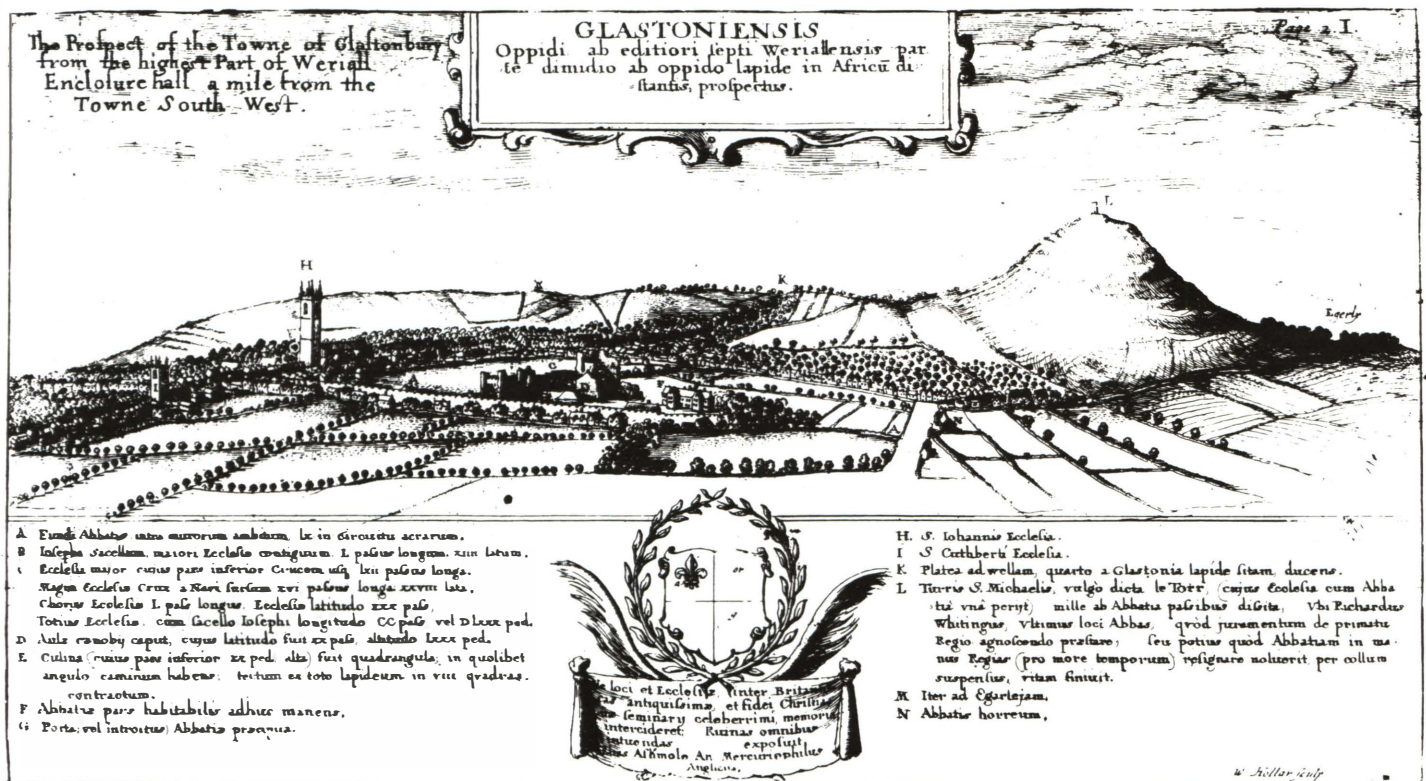
Recently, an appeal from the *Skeptical Inquirer* arrived which, probably inadvertently, lets the cat out of the bag. "Ranged against us", (note the paranoia — or is it melodrama?), "are the mass media: movies, TV, magazines, newspapers and book publications, many of which continue to portray the paranormal as real." The CSICP, presumably, knows for sure that it is not and will defy every attempt to prove otherwise — in the name of scepticism, of course.

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- 1 "Man's place in living nature", *The Humanist* Vol XV, No 4, 1955.
- 2 "A Marxist-non-Marxist Dialogue", *The Humanist* Vol XXIX No 1, 1969.
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Unearthing Glastonbury's secrets

Bligh Bond is the father of psychic archaeology. David G. Bower reviews the contribution he made to our knowledge of Glastonbury Abbey and the methods Bond used to discover fresh facts.



Glastonbury: a setting of mystical mystery.

IN 1907 the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey were bought for £30,000 for the Nation and placed in the care and keeping of a Diocesan Trust. They were anxious that excavations should commence and, in 1908, the Somerset Archaeological Society was entrusted with this task. The Director of Excavations was Frederick Bligh Bond, an ecclesiastical architect from Bristol who was noted for his work on rood-screens and rood-lofts. This was to be the start of what must surely be one of the most fascinating cases of psychic detective work on record. Not only was Bond guided to unearth two of the Abbey's lost chapels but he also discovered that the ancient science of gematria had been employed by the Abbey builders.

Bond was interested in the mysteries of life and death from childhood. He was greatly influenced in his youth by Catherine Crowe's classic book on psychic research, *The Night Side of Nature*. Like Crowe, Bond was concerned that learned people should investigate psychic claims seriously and not dismiss them out of hand.

Bond and his friend Captain John Bartlett, both members of the Society for

Psychical Research, had many times discussed the great differences between Western and Eastern wisdom. The former relying on observation of external phenomena, the latter always seeking inwards. They felt that it should be possible to combine the two by harnessing the intuitive faculty along scientific lines and applying it to archaeology for example. Bond puzzled for a time over the best method for achieving this which would also eliminate the normal thought process.

The answer that came to him was to try Bartlett's ability to receive automatic writing, which to date had been uncultivated. Thus at 4.30pm on 7th November 1907 the great experiment started. Bond posed the question "Can you tell us anything about Glastonbury?" The answer that came through Bartlett's hand in small irregular writing started "All knowledge is eternal and is available to mental sympathy". There followed rough plan drawings and measurements relating to the Abbey. These messages, in a strange mixture of poor Latin and early English appeared to come from long dead monks of past centuries. Further sittings followed which were to provide a wealth of details

concerning the layout of the Abbey and ecclesiastical life.

Unknown to the authorities Bond commenced his excavations following directions received through automatic writing. One of the first projects he undertook was an investigation of the details given in the first automatic drawings which showed a chapel at the east end of the abbey. The given position and size of the chapel had puzzled him as there was no known documentary evidence to support the details. Also, it would have been contrary to the architectural style of that time. But, surely enough, the script details of the chapel, built by Abbot Bere in the early 1500's and named after King Edgar, proved substantially correct. This story of success continued as time after time excavation proved the accuracy of the automatic script details. It included the discovery of an unknown doorway at the extreme east, the unusual use of azure glass in windows, an unexpected addition to the Edgar Chapel — a polygonal apse, an unknown crypt and even intricate details of the colouring of one of the chapel ceilings.

In 1918 Bond published the details of his psychic detective work in his book *The*

Gate of Remembrance. One can imagine the horror of church and archaeological authorities at these revelations. Immediately money was in short supply for future excavations, new committees were formed, a co-director of excavations was appointed and then Bond received the most stunning blow of his life. The man who had devoted so much of his time and love to Glastonbury was, in 1922, relieved of his duties and despite much effort to restore his position was never allowed to excavate at Glastonbury again. To add insult to injury, a number of the markings that he left to show his archaeological discoveries were removed or altered and have not to this day been corrected. Also the sale of his books, including the scholarly *Architectural Handbook to Glastonbury Abbey*, was banned at the Abbey bookstall. He then spent some considerable time in America lecturing and as editor of the journal of their Society for Psychical Research.

However, before his dismissal, Bond had a chance to prove the critics wrong who claimed that he excavated the Edgar Chapel first then concocted the scripts before publication of *The Gate of Remembrance*. In the book he also gave details of the position, measurements and style of the Loretto Chapel, as received through the hand of Bartlett. At the time the existing knowledge about this chapel was very limited. In 1919, the year following the publication of these scripts, Bond excavated this chapel and found that although he had slightly misinterpreted the scripts (for example, by taking external an internal measurements) they were in the main accurate.

Automatic scripts came through the hands of other mediums as well as Bartlett's. The range of topics was not exclusive to Glastonbury Abbey as demonstrated by Bond's book *The Hill of Vision* which was the result of a series of remarkable prophecies about the Great War and the political state of Europe.

Another interesting script states "...The earth's surface is traversed by lines and 'ganglia' of spiritual forces, following the solar windings, such as you see in the windings of a coil in scientific engines. These lines and focal points have an attractive power over man; they draw him into their focus..." a reference to ley lines in a script dated six years before publication of Alfred Watkins' *The Old Straight Track*?

Most of his scripts claimed to come from a group calling themselves 'The Watchers' or 'The Company of Avalon'. This consisted of between twenty and thirty different personalities that made themselves known through the hand of the automatist. These were entities that at one time or another had in past centuries been closely associated with the Abbey or the town of Glastonbury itself. They ranged from Abbot Bere, builder of the Edgar Chapel to John Parsons the humble cowherd.

One of the most frequent and loveable characters that came through was

Johannes Bryant, monk and stonemason. He claimed to have lived between 1497 and 1533.

Bond wrote: "As to the story of Johannes the truant monk and nature lover, it takes the form of an interpretation of his memory-record by another. Whether we are dealing with a singularly vivid imaginative picture or with the personality of a man no one can really decide. But later examples will elucidate the part he plays in the scheme, and it is one of much interest from the psychological point of view."

To illustrate the character of Johannes there follows part of a script signed by one Guliedmus of Glaston who says about him, "...He loved the woods and the pleasant places which lie without our house. It was good, for he learnt in the temple of nature much that he would never hear in choro. His herte was of the country and he heard it calling without the walls and the Abbot winked at it for he knew full well that it was good for him. He went fishing, did Johannes, and tarried oft in lanes to listen to the birds and to watch the shadows lengthening over the woods of Mere. He loved them well, and many times no fish had he, for that he had forgot them ... but we cared not for he came with talk and pleasant converse, as nutbrown ale, and it was well. And because he was of nature his soul was pure and he is of the Company that doth watch and wait for the glories to be renewed."

In other scripts Johannes gives us some delightful descriptions of the Abbey and its life and some of his own thoughts. These include an amusing story of how the Abbot thought he had disgraced the Abbey in front of the visiting King Henry VIII as a barrel of ale had accidentally burst its contents over the monk and the king thought him drunk!

Who were these mysterious Watchers? Were they just simply the surviving intelligences of past inhabitants of the Abbey and town? There seemed to be an element of timelessness involved as if, for example, a particular entity could not answer a question about a certain historical time another would come forward to assist. If a message was cut short it would restart at the same place hours or days later. There was a high level of consistency as information was repeated exactly, sometimes years apart. One gets the impression that the Watchers had been waiting for a person such as Bond, who was in sympathy with them, to share their memories and hopes. The Watchers seemed to be at different levels in that some seemed permanently tied to the Abbey while others seemed free to come and go at will.

In various of his published works Bond wrote concerning the source of his automatic communications. He argued that there is a point when an individual consciousness will realise the fruitlessness of the autocentric impulse and will "...be born into the larger life of communal sympathy..." Those who have reached this state will on death, using the terminology of the Catholic Church, pass

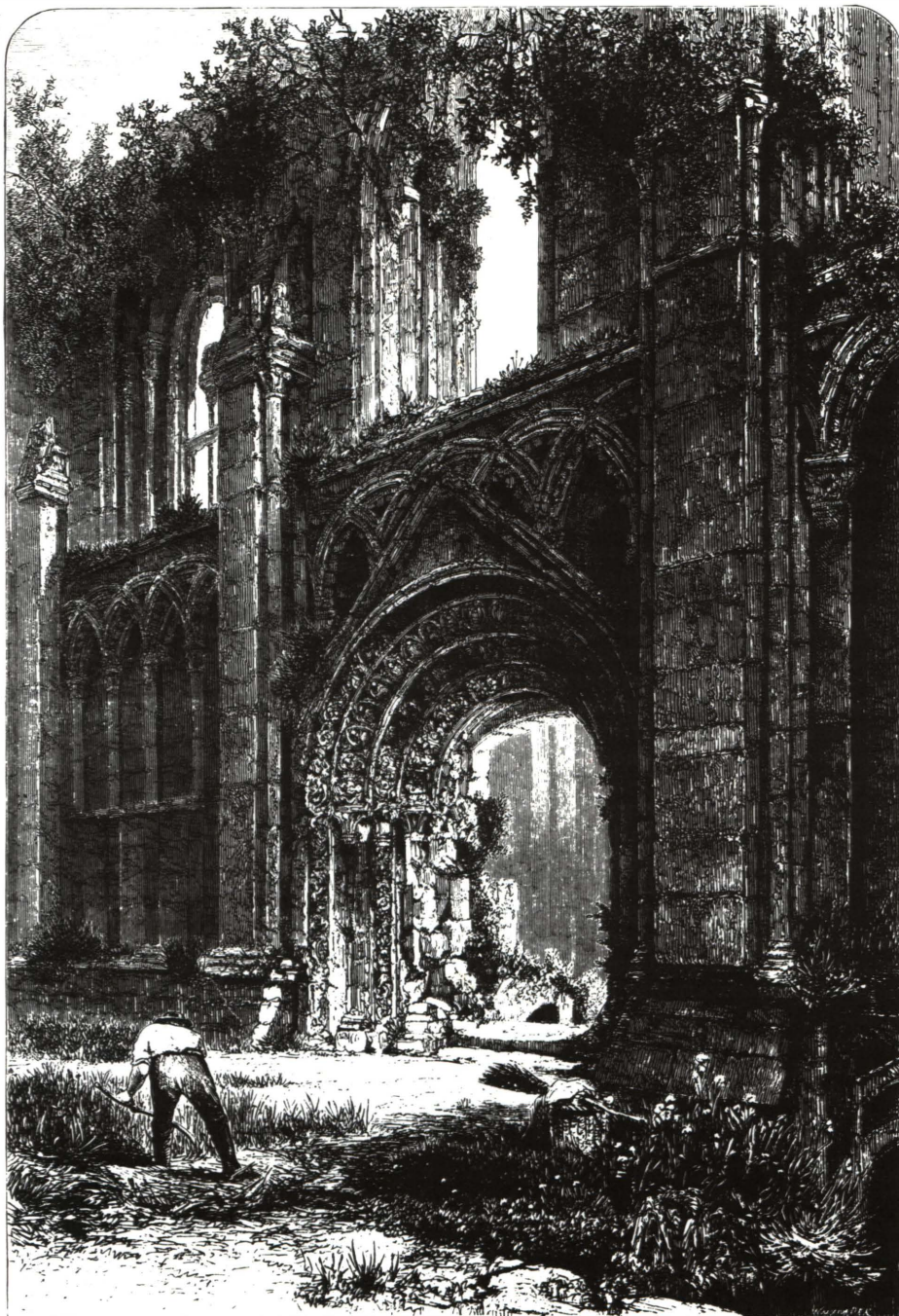
into Paradise (sphere of spiritual sympathy) while those who have not come to this great realization will pass into Purgatory (spheres of isolation and self-centredness.) The hypothesis continues: "...there would be the most fundamental difference between possible communion with souls in Purgatory and with those in Paradise. The former which contributes most of the facts of what we term Spiritualism — would exhibit marked limitations of knowledge and sympathies and a tendency to stress the more human and exterior token of personality."

"The dominant purpose of the seeker on this side would be the perpetuation of lost links of human affection and on the side of the departed soul, a revival of the comforts of physical contact. In contrast to this, consider the possibilities of communion with the souls of those whose consciousness has broken the shell of personal limitation and has become a part, integral and symmetric, of the great spiritual units co-ordinated in overruling intelligence and sympathy. Individual character, specific aim and purpose, all the cherished and essential values of mind and soul would co-exist in a medium of responsive intelligence and sympathetic activity, and each unit would reflect the powers and attributes of the whole."

"The physical limitation of time and space being transcended there would be a linking of the consciousness of past and present and the chain of cause and effect being thus laid open to the spiritual view, the future would also reveal itself to a degree co-ordinate with the extent of such knowledge. The degree of that knowledge would be measured by the mental and spiritual sympathy possessed by the soul of the observer, and it would not be of the nature of physical intelligence or intellect essentially, but rather of the nature of rationalised intuition, an instantaneous recognition derived from the union of subject and object in the mutual apprehension of a relation of reality."

Bond was a subscriber to the theory of a cosmic or universal memory which embraced all individual experience and also transcended the ordinary limits of time and personality. This was a similar concept to that of Jung's collective unconscious and James' cosmic reservoir. He did not feel that the communications were a result of contacting individual discarnate intelligences. Other equally fascinating discourses of Bond's included the symbolism of the Zodiac as applied to the early church at Glastonbury and on the part reincarnation has played in the unfolding story of the great Abbey. There are even hints pointing at a theory of group reincarnation that has now been so well documented in the books by Dr. Arthur Guirdham.

In the scripts there were hints of an ancient system of measure at Glastonbury, for example: "As we have said, our Abbey was a message in the stones. In the foundations and the distance be a mystery — the mystery of our Faith which you have forgotten..." Bond discovered that the



Bligh Bond's discoveries led to fresh archaeological finds at Glastonbury Abbey.

builders of Glastonbury Abbey had used the ancient science of gematria and sacred geometry. That is the system whereby letters of the Greek or Hebrew alphabets have numerical equivalents so that by transposition a numerical link is present between different words and phrases.

This system emerged in the Syro-Phoenician centre east of the Mediterranean about the fifth century BC, but is believed to be of even earlier origin out of the East. Bond in partnership with the then vicar of St Austell, Dr Thomas Simcox Lea re-discovered this lost teaching and wrote two scholarly books following much detailed research. They felt that number and form (geometry) are timeless and thus ideal vehicles for passing on natural truths which must have been the aim of the compilers of the Scriptures. One example quoted is the gematria of Jesus

Christ which equals 2368. They found over 500 key phrases which expressed the idea of Jesus/God/Creation equalling by gematria 2368.

Bond found two systems which had been used to determine ground plans of medieval churches and buildings:

1. A system of commensurate squares.
2. A system of equilateral triangles, which, when contained in parallelograms, gave a rectangular field or setting.

The principle was "...one of geomatric perfection, the object being the reproduction of the form of the rhombus of two equilateral triangles in the greatest degree of accuracy consonant with practical methods of building and harmonious scales of measurement..." Bond illustrated this in the proportions of St. Mary's Chapel at Glastonbury Abbey.

His claim also noted that the whole of the Abbey was planned on commensurate squares of 74 feet which equals 888 inches, which is also the gematria of Jesus. This was assuming that the polygonal apse at the east end which he had excavated existed, this being a matter of some controversy. He was in fact supported as Queen Elizabeth I's commissioner stated that the total length was 592 feet (8 x 74).

Bond's pioneering work on gematria and sacred geometry at Glastonbury has been recently tested by the noted architect Keith Critchlow and found to be correct. In recent years there has been an increasing interest in gematria and the Research Into Lost Knowledge Organization Trust (RILKO) has republished the two books on the subject by Bond and Lea, thus acknowledging their work which has been cribbed by many later writers. RILKO has also republished *The Gate of Remembrance*. His interest in gematria undoubtedly was part of his downfall as church and archaeological authorities regarded them as suspect. However recent work by Professor T.C. Bannister, at the Old St Peter's Basilica in Rome where gematria was used, has given Bond's theories academic respectability.

Bond was, as his biographer William W. Kenawell put it, a man who "possessed such clarity of insight and penetrating analysis to be ranked among the truly great minds of the day." Today, psychic archaeology is a subject for serious university research and Bond could be rightly called its father.

Bond's motto was "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good", and this he applied to his psychic research. His methods show an excellent example for us to follow today. He tried very hard to keep the automatist's attention away from the script by reading to him or talking with him. The scripts often came through at 60 words per minute.

Bond always checked up on the scripts as far as he could by documentary research or excavation. Many gaps in the history of the Abbey were indeed filled. The noted archaeologist Dr Raleigh Radford has stated that Bond's technique in archaeology was "...as advanced as any at the time..." Bond was unable to check all the material from the scripts and so today there is still a chance to verify their accuracy. We must salute a brilliant archaeologist who did so much for Glastonbury Abbey. A man who published his methods in the interest of psychic research, probably knowing that it would jeopardise his reputation, but perhaps not realizing that it would ruin his whole career.

The Gate of Remembrance by F. B. Bond.
The Company of Avalon by F. B. Bond.
The Hill of Vision by F. B. Bond.
An Architectural Handbook to Glastonbury Abbey by F. B. Bond.
Gematria by F. B. Bond and T. S. Lea.
The Apostolic Gnosis by F. B. Bond and T. S. Lea.
The Quest at Glastonbury by W. W. Kenawell.
Psychic Archaeology by J. Goodman.
Sacred Geometry by K. Critchlow.
Glastonbury — A study in Patterns, by RILKO.
 RILKO Newsletters.

A positive solution

José Silva's courses have opened people's minds to possibilities they have barely dreamed of. David Harvey describes the man, his ideas and the method he teaches.

CAN we do more with our minds than is conventionally believed? Is it possible to transcend the limits of our five senses? The answer to both questions is unequivocally Yes, according to José Silva, founder of the Silva Mind Control training course.

Not that he is the first to say so. Such claims that have been made by many others over the years. The major difference is that Silva maintains that the ability is latent in everyone — if they take the trouble to develop the techniques which will turn this ability on.

He has stripped the psychic process down to its bare essentials and devised a training course that enables people to discover their talents for themselves. He has also tried to make it seem ordinary and natural rather than freakish and unusual. Silva is not concerned with turning people into psychic supermen. His message is that there is a better way of thinking and living that utilises all our faculties. To become fully functioning, we need to tap the resources that lie beneath the analytical, rational surface of our waking brains. Neither level of mental activity can replace the other. Paul Fransella, a lecturer in the Silva method, makes this quite clear: "We have both levels of ability and we should understand the limitations and use of each."

Briefly, the core of the method is a form of dynamic meditation that uses visualisation and other techniques. It can be used to improve health and personal effectiveness or to obtain information that is not accessible to the ordinary senses. It can be used for healing.

But it is not necessary to jump in at the deep end. The courses are structured to introduce new concepts and possibilities progressively.

The first step, in common with most other forms of meditation, is to learn to relax and enter a deeper level of mind. This is the sine qua non of the method because it is at the alpha level, says Silva, that results can be achieved that are impossible in a normal waking state.

It can bring control of unwanted habits and health problems, for example. A good number of people attracted to the courses do so to give up smoking, conquer insomnia and migraines or just to learn how to relax properly.

Chris Shaw was one person who was looking for ways of coping better with his life. He had taken on an extra load of work and worry with the formation of his own chartered surveyors, property and architectural consultancy.

He took the basic course in 1978 and as

well as learning to wind down and relax found that there were other bonuses.

"In our work, we are always in the middle, between the client and the builder. They each come to you with their problems and it's your responsibility to explain them to the other side. It's rather like being a building psychiatrist.

"I used to find it very difficult, a source of considerable aggravation. But now it's almost as if it's magic. I am able to resolve problems in my mind's eye and the whole process is much easier." Overall, Chris Shaw found that the Silva course was beneficial because "it gives a feeling of greater confidence and greater capacity for work." A subjective reflection, maybe, but one of profound importance. As a school of medical thought believes, attitude and mind can be major determinants in health and sickness.

Another graduate of the Silva course is Dr Carl Simonton who has pioneered his own programme of cancer treatment in which the patient is encouraged to play an active role in tackling the disease. "I found the Mind Control concepts gave me a tool to use in teaching the patient how to begin the interaction and become involved with his own health process. I would say that it is the most powerful single tool that I have to offer the patient," says Dr Simonton.

His therapy includes self-help visualisation techniques that enable the patient to fight the disease rather than passively accept the treatment administered to him.

There is growing support for the notion that a large percentage of illness is tied up with an individual's emotional and mental resilience, and that many diseases are psychosomatic in nature. It is a recognition of the power of mind to affect health adversely. It is also probably fair to say that the proposition is widely accepted: an acknowledgement of the reality of mind power.

What Silva says is that used positively, the mind can be a powerful weapon, not only for countering ill health but for promoting efficiency and effectiveness.

Again, this is not new. Positive thinking is a system that has had its proponents in the past.

But Silva does not pretend to have discovered a new principle. What he has done is to put together those ideas and practices that lend themselves to his purpose: to use mind to its utmost. In this context, it is worth mentioning how he first became interested in the subject.

When he was bringing up his children — ten in all — like all parents he wanted them to do well. He began exploring ways of

improving learning ability and this led to experiments with hypnotism and the investigation of other mental training techniques, ultimately, parapsychology and meditation.

Essentially, what he discovered was that there is an ideal relaxed, yet active and receptive, state of mind. He soon abandoned hypnotism in favour of meditation-like techniques for achieving the desired effect. It worked. His children attained higher grades and other families wanted to find out the Silva secret.

His search for better mental performance did not end there. Fresh horizons and possibilities opened up. Quite out of the blue, while his daughter was working at her deeper level, answering questions put by her father, she answered a question he had not yet verbalised. Another discussion was added to his system. That was back in the fifties. Following that, he refined the methods and launched his first course in 1966 in Laredo, Texas. Since then, the Silva Mind Control Method has been taught throughout the United States and other countries. Recently, the course has been introduced to the U.K.

The basic course is run over two weekends and takes forty or so hours. It covers the basic techniques: how to achieve the key deeper level of mind and some of the ways in which it can be used to improve memory, solve problems and promote health and well being. It culminates with a challenging test of psychic ability.

There is considerable emphasis on health and healing in the courses, particularly at more advanced stages. At the end of the basic training, students are given the opportunity to find out about their own ability to diagnose illnesses and indispositions remotely.

Working in threes, each member of the group operates as questioner, note taker and psychic in turn. The psychic is presented with the name of a person, their age and sex and asked to tell what is wrong with them. The cases are known personally to the questioner, but, of course, not to the others. The member of the group acting as the psychic uses his mind's eye to form an image of the person and identify their ailments.

Although by no means 100 per cent accurate, I found my own attempts near enough the mark to surprise myself on two out of the three cases. Another member of the group was more consistently correct. But the third did not get good results on that occasion.

For some of us, José Silva's vision of possibilities no longer seemed so remote.

Breaking the attitude barrier

Do orthodox ideas of what is and is not possible prevent us from believing what we see? Graham Lawrence suggests that our attitude to phenomena is as crucial as the evidence itself.

Mary Evans Picture Library



Meteors — stones falling from the sky — were once considered impossible.

I WAS standing in a library a few years ago, leafing through one of a number of books that could be described as “anti-weirdo”. The authors were defending the world-view of rational scientific man by providing explanations — or in some cases, “explanations” — for everything from alleged levitation to haunted houses.

In this particular book the writer had attended Spiritualist seances and he had much to say about the power of suggestion; if the people at the seance wanted to believe in something, if they really wanted to see something, chances are it would happen. This is of course a valid point. However, he

described a specific occasion when he was present and the medium conjured up an apparition of a spirit dog, which everyone at the seance except the writer (not being a gullible believer) saw walking, padded, and heard barking. He held his experience to be proof that nothing but hallucination was taking place.

It seemed to me that there was something wrong here. If the seance room had been a closed system, separate from outside society, and if sanity is defined as agreement with the beliefs and attitudes of the majority, he would have been the only insane person in the room. Or perhaps not insane, but blind. Just suppose, I thought,

that the dog really was there; but because of some fault in his perception, the writer was not able to see or hear him; then he is the one for whom we should feel sorry, not the others at the seance. If apparitions are phenomena of consciousness and your consciousness is not “tuned in”, then it’s hard luck on you.

I can imagine that writer reading the previous sentence and accusing me of playing with words. Surely a hallucination is a “phenomenon of consciousness” that is not necessarily shared; but I am not in fact redefining “hallucination”. A dream is an unshared phenomenon of consciousness but it is not a hallucination.

Without putting it forward as an unarguable truth, I am simply trying to provide food for thought by hypothesising that in some way, on some level, the apparition of the dog had “reality”, but the sceptic was blocked from being able to relate to it. And this really sums up the central problem in the whole misty and fascinating area of the paranormal: it is not the nature of the facts or experiments or eyewitness accounts which make up the evidence, it is not the nature of the attitudes with which the evidence is confronted. I do not mean this only in the straightforward sense of preconceptions, such as “Psychokinesis is impossible: therefore this report is a hoax or a mistake.” I mean also the attitudes towards the way in which they decide that something is impossible in the first place.

This is best illustrated by an example. Let us take the concept of invisibility. The usual approach would be to say that this will never be accomplished because it is impossible, and it is impossible because (a) you cannot change the refractive index of every substance in the human body without affecting the nature of the substances, probably with fatal results, and (b) the invisible man, as H.G.Wells was astute enough to notice, would be blind because light rays would pass straight through his head instead of stopping at his retina.

These arguments can not be dismissed as long as you continue to think of invisibility as a physical property of whatever is invisible. There is a way round it which we could think of as “imaginative hard science”; if the man could wear a device which would bend light rays around his body, he could be invisible to viewers in one direction without perhaps being blind or actually changing anything in his body. I imagine that, for the next few decades at least, such a device would present insurmountable technological problems.

However, there is another way of

approaching this. Visibility, as optical illusions tell us, is not simply hard physics, but is a phenomenon of consciousness. For something to be invisible, it has to be physically present but not noticeable by a potential perceiver. There have been a number of experiments in which the subjects were placed in a hypnotic trance and told that they would not be able to see either some person or some thing, such as a chair, in the same room. Sure enough, the subject will do anything but notice what is not to be seen. They will look at everyone in the room except the 'invisible' man; they will walk around the 'invisible' chair and yet maintain that they have crossed an empty floor in a straight line.

My point is that without interfering with any of the laws of chemistry or physics, those hypnotists have demonstrated that invisibility can be a reality in the only meaningful sense. If you have the ability, either psychic or technological, to divert attention from you, then you can be invisible without having to be concerned with bending light or not being able to see. This principle can be generalised, in that levitation, for example, could be a possibility without interfering with any of the laws of gravity, which are of course the sceptic's reason for dismissing such reports; it's just that we do not yet know how to think about it.

Most people will dismiss reports of unproven phenomena such as teleportation or resurrection, or arguably proven ones such as apparitions (when something disappears in one place and reappears in another) or psychic surgery, not because of what is possible in reality, but because of their ideas of what is possible; not because of what really happens, but because of their conception of what could possibly happen.

To take psychic surgery, there are of course any number of good reasons — in the form of exposed frauds — to believe in its non-reality. However, if I give you ten thousand forged five-pound notes, I have not demonstrated the non-existence of genuine five-pound notes; such an assumption would of course be a logical error. Anyone who has read about Arigo, the Brazilian psychic surgeon who died in 1971, will probably agree that he was a genuine five-pound note, besides which TV documentaries about counterfeit currency pale into complete insignificance.

The two million witnesses to the feats of Arigo, most of them still alive, are a little more important than a few con-men in the Philippines and elsewhere. However, the attitudes which lead to the rejection of all stories of psychic surgery rest also upon insecurity; upon the fear that if my view of how the universe works rests at least partly upon the safe predictability of laws such as those of physics and chemistry, then if what Arigo did is true, those laws collapse, and my views become a yawning, terrifying vacuum.

The only way to conquer this is to realise that as our knowledge of nature unfolds, it is much more often that we build upon

what we already know than we destroy what we once thought we knew. The reality of Einstein's universe did not destroy Newton's universe, it was simply "more true"; and Arigo somehow operated on a level of reality which overlapped ours, not destroyed it. It is as ridiculous to think that

hates "the occult" can demonstrate scientifically that there is no difference between a pyramid and a shoe-box. Someone who is enthusiastic about the expanding horizons of knowledge can demonstrate a correlation between the healing rates of wounded mice and the



Charles Darwin — time for a rethink?

one well-documented case of levitation would annihilate the practical reality of gravitation as to think that Einstein's theories destroyed the continuing usefulness of Newtonian physics.

Fortunately there is a growing awareness of the relationship between the consciousness of the experimenter and the results of his experiments. Someone who

shape of the cage they are kept in. And they may both be right.

There is a book by Robert Rosenthal called *Experimenter Effects in Behavioural Research* (Meredith Co, New York, 1966), which shows that the results of scientific research have depended upon the motives of the experimenter; on the results he expects to get because they would fit in

with theories he already holds to be true, or on his need for approval by other researchers, and a number of other factors, factors which are emotional rather than dispassionate. The facts, it seems, can be psychologically influenced rather than objectively "there", waiting to be discovered.

What is really amazing is how little impact our growing understanding of psychology has had on the attitudes or the scientific establishment. An awful lot of people have the idea that if man doesn't destroy himself, the 22nd century will be just like the 20th century, only more so. If you suggested that the 20th century was like the 17th only more so, they would say of course not, things were different then, people were superstitious and ignorant and didn't really understand things the way we do. Yet the explosive rate of scientific knowledge suggests that the 22nd century will be even more alien to us than our life would be to a man from 1680; quite a staggering thought.

The point is that emotionally-held prejudices resulting from the need to defend the consistency of one's world-view have not diminished at all. There is no evidence for assuming that today's scientists are less inclined to hold irrational prejudices, or more inclined to be open-minded, than men of centuries gone by. The history of science is very far from being the history of new truths welcomed with open arms. It is more a history of ignorance and suppression.

The man who introduced hand-washing for doctors after handling corpses and before assisting with childbirth was not only accused of being a fool, he was hounded out of the medical profession and into suicide. The glaringly obvious fact that within weeks, deaths from childbirth at that hospital were down 70 per cent was nowhere near as powerful as the emotional effect of the implied accusation that doctors carried death on their hands.

In the 18th century, all eyewitness reports of meteorites were dismissed as mistakes or lies. They could not be true as it was perfectly obvious that there are no rocks up in the sky. The theoretical framework comes first and has to be held up like religious dogma. The ideal of science, that evidence comes first and creates theoretical frameworks and not vice versa, has been attained by very few individuals on very few occasions, and is generally not respected in practice.

The 20th century equivalent of the meteorite may be the UFO. The supposed irrationality of the belief, arising from certain opinions about The Way Things Are, is much more important to otherwise scientific minds than the words of a hundred thousand witnesses. Logically and open-mindedly, that is the absurd belief, unless you have a view of human nature that is so incredibly cynical as to be equivalent to a paranoid delusion, in which I believe I am surrounded by huge numbers of liars and fools and practical jokers who do not have My Vision or My Common Sense. After all, to believe absolutely

anything about science you ultimately have to rely on the eyewitness testimony of the men in the laboratories.

One of the principles of thought which is attitude-creating is Occam's Razor. Basically, this means that where there are two possible explanations for a phenomenon, one that is clear and simple and does not contradict any previously held facts, and another that is more obscure and complicated and revolutionary, reject the second and accept the first. I used to have an unreserved respect for this principle. Eventually it dawned on me that there are times when it would be a positive barrier to an increase in understanding, and that its limited usefulness should be kept in mind. In the 18th century, for example, reports of meteorites could have meant either (a) people were lying or mistaken, or (b) rocks really did fall from the sky sometimes. Applying Occam's Razor, you would have accepted alternative (a); and you would have been totally wrong. I do not want to open the floodgates to uncritical gullibility, but I suggest that the rejection of, for example, all one-witness claims to sightings of a UFO on a lonely country road or within two miles of an airport, on the principle of Occam's Razor — he/she is a liar or it was an aeroplane — maybe, but is not necessarily or inevitably, a wise decision.

The Einsteinian view of the universe, experimentally demonstrated to be more valid than Newton's, is in the well-entrenched position of a sacred cow of science. It is popularly held to be completely true and it follows that whatever the theories imply must also be true, so that, for example, it will never ever be possible to travel faster than light, no matter what technological advances are made, because That Is The Way The Universe Is.

No one seems to imagine that one day, some new genius will provide theories of the universe that overlap and transcend Einstein's. Einstein's theory requires that the speed of light is absolute, that no matter at what speed or in what direction you are travelling, the speed of light is always exactly the same relative to you. It is not surprising that hardly anyone knows that the Michelson-Morely experiment of 1887, or D.C. Miller's duplication of the experiment of thirty years later with more accurate instruments, apparently demonstrated that this is simply not true. According to the experimental evidence, light travelling in the direction of the Earth's orbit travelled more slowly relative to the observer than light travelling back the other way. The difference was small, about five miles per second, but real.

A generation later, this result was confirmed with yet more precise instruments by W. Kantor of the US Navy Electronics Laboratory. Let's face it: the Einsteinian view of the universe is not perfect, and will one day be improved upon. For the moment, these experiments are ignored. They have to be. We cannot fit them in. One day they will be fitted in, but not by someone who is not prepared to

look with fresh eyes, or by someone who will not consider rejecting something about the currently held views on The Way Things Are. There are more than enough of those people, and they are not the people responsible for progress in any area of science.

As a non-specialist member of the public I have been subject to an educational system and a number of expensive television documentaries which embedded in my world-view the alleged truth of neo-Darwinian evolution: the theory that all species now existing in this mindless mechanical universe are the result of completely random mutations, the inefficient ones having been weeded out by their incompetence to deal with either their environment or their enemies. The clinging to this doctrine is the best possible illustration of my central point about attitudes.

Unknown to the public at large, including television executives, the classical ideas about evolution have been torn to shreds over the last few decades, not by the woolly-minded arguments of those with a theological axe to grind, but by the findings of the biologists and evolutionists themselves. Fortunately there is increasing intelligent interest in the oppositions to Darwinism. The arguments are too many to be summarised here, but are put forward extremely well in *Darwin Retried* (London, 1971) by Harvard lawyer Norman Macbeth.

The most recent summary of the situation, including speculations about a modified process of "creative evolution", is in a book called *Janus* (Hutchinson, 1978) by no less a respected thinker than Arthur Koestler.

As you can see, anti-evolutionism is not the exclusive property of a lunatic fringe that can be safely ignored. When I read *Darwin Retried* it really knocked me for a loop. I had to think about it for a couple of weeks before it could really sink in exactly how absurd so many aspects of the theory really are. You have been warned. The best description of the effect of acceptance or rejection of classical evolutionary theory on our attitudes towards what we are prepared to believe is possible, or how unreasonably we will cling to a certain notion of the way the universe works, is in John Randall's *Parapsychology and the Nature of Life* (Souvenir Press, 1975).

If man wants to progress and expand, he must learn to recognise why he believes or disbelieves things. If we do not have the courage to attack our own opinions — for it usually takes no courage to attack the opinions of someone else where they differ from ours — then we may be digging our own intellectual and possibly spiritual graves. It seems a strong possibility to me that some aspects of unusual phenomena and "fringe sciences" could hold the key to the future of man, and our only hope is for men to reject what is not valid only for good well-examined reasons, and not to equate "paranormal" with "sub-normal"; for when they laugh, they laugh with their eyes closed.

PHENOMENA

Fortean Picture Library/Aaron Sussman.



Charles Fort.

WELCOME to the first of a regular column by the editorial team of *Fortean Times*, a journal that continues the work of Charles Fort, the pioneer collector and student of curiosities, anomalies, omens, mysteries and all manner of strange phenomena and their likely and unlikely explanations. A constant stream of newscippings is sent to *Fortean Times* by readers all over the world, and our intention is to entertain you with a selection of the reports and news which reaches us between one issue of *Alpha* and the next.

Those interested in fuller coverage of these stories and the widest possible range of strange phenomena are invited to send for a sample copy of *Fortean Times* at the special rate of 75p, or \$3.00 airmail, or write for details to: *Fortean Times* (AP), 9-12 St Annes Court, London W1, England.

Fish and Ice Falls

FISH kept falling on the M5 motorway between Taunton and Wellington. And ice kept falling on Harold Wood (the place, not the man).

The explanation for the fish was plausible enough... but why always on this particular stretch of Somerset motorway? On 8 February it was closed for the third time in three weeks, to clear away a fall of fish. This time a lorry was said to have dropped its tailgate and scattered tons of mackerel for five miles.

As for the ice, the tired old explanation involving ice on aircraft wings fails to impress us. For starters, we know that ice has been coming down long before aircraft were flying at all.

At 11.45 am on Saturday 16 February, Janet Hammond was standing in her kitchen in New Hall Drive, Harold Wood, Essex, when she heard an almighty bang. A lump of ice had cracked the roof and shattered over the back garden. Not a mile away, another ice-bomb had fallen on the house

of Frederick Cannon in Court Avenue the previous October. (*Telegraph* 9 Feb; *Havering Post and Romford Hornchurch Express* 23 Feb 1980.)

News of Morgawr

MORGAWR, Nessie's cousin in Falmouth Bay, Cornwall, has surfaced again. From our correspondent Doc Shiels we learn that Jeff Watson managed to get a photograph of the beastie in the Helford during February, on the same morning that David Grey and his girlfriend had their sighting. It seems that he had also snapped Nessie a while back, so Doc's feat of capturing both on film is no longer unique. (These photos will appear in *Fortean Times*' summer issue (FT32).)

Mr Watson had also interviewed some people living near the Helford who had seen Morgawr during the sixties, which means that the Scott/Riley sighting of 1975 was not the first of the 'modern' series after all.

The *Falmouth Packet* (7 Mar 1980) tells us that at least two television companies are planning documentary films on Morgawr, and that more than one book is being written about her/him/it.

Highest Shoe in the World

WHAT WAS a lady's high-heeled shoe, crafted from fine brown leather, doing 25,700 feet up Mount Everest?

On 28 February, Tseng Shu-sheng, an instructor with the Chinese Mountaineering Association, announced that the shoe had been discovered in an old British climbers' camp from the twenties or thirties, during the 1960 Chinese expedition in which he had taken part. It was lying among old oxygen gear and tent poles. It is possible that the camp might have been made by Mallory and Irvine who were last seen making for the summit at about 28,000 feet in 1924.

A spokesman for the Alpine Club said: "At those altitudes no climber would take anything that was not absolutely vital to the expedition." Lord Hunt, leader of the 1952 expedition, said the story was "not only incredible; it was impossible." So who has the last laugh? Was it a holy man demonstrating his powers, or a Chinaman his sense of humour? Was it a goof-up in the planetary teleport service? Evidence or transvestite mountaineers, daredevil summit champagne toasters or... no, surely not. (*Vancouver Sun* 29 Feb; *Telegraph* 29 Feb & 1 Mar; *Express* 1 Mar 1980)

Where's the Blood?

CANNIBALISM is still with us, as we were reminded by recent revelations concerning deposed African potentates. In January a Swede called Bangt Hjalmarsson was busted in Malmo after half-eaten female remains were found in his fridge. His diary revealed details of several ritual murders.

New Guinea children are denied such pleasures of the flesh. In the January issue of *World Medicine* there's a photo of some Papua New Guinea natives with the caption: "Once these people were cannibals. Now 80 per cent of children under five are malnourished."

On 21 February, the battered bodies of an artist and his mistress were found rolled in a carpet beside a lonely road in New Jersey. They had been drained of blood so thoroughly that a coroner could not squeeze enough from their hearts for a sample.

Many of the mutilated livestock discovered in the western states of America in recent years have also been bloodless. Are these materialisations of something nasty in the collective unconscious (what Tom Bearden calls 'tulpoid popouts'), and is this latest horror an example of the escalation of the phenomenon predicted by Bearden in *Fortean Times* No. 26?

Or is it witchcraft? It is known that the New Jersey couple, Howard Green, 53, and Carol Manning, 33, were members of a witches' coven, so the police suspected ritual sacrifice. The method of such thorough draining remains a puzzle. They called in Dr Kaplan, director of the Vampire Research Center of America, who is convinced that vampires are real. After hundreds of interviews, he has determined that at least eight true vampires live in North America.

"In New York there is a vampire who is an engineer", he said.

"And we have a female model living in Oregon who is also a vampire."

If you know of any practising vampires in Britain, we would be pleased to hear from you.

(*D. Star* 23 Jan; *Mirror* 22 Feb 1980; *Midnight Globe* 2 Oct 1979; *Fortean Times* Number 26, Summer 1978.)

A Time for Dying

AS WE *Fortean Times* staffers chuckle over the cornucopia of clippings that arrive every week, we note trends that seem to be way over the odds for random occurrence. Phantom dress-snippers or human torches come in waves when their time is ripe. Suddenly a whole lot of cars plunge into rivers and wedding

rings start turning up in the most uncanny way.

Anyway, February this year was a time for grave humour. It started with Canon Fred Hoyle falling into a black hole — that is, a grave in Rochdale Cemetary — and breaking his shoulder. He made ecclesiastical history by being the first vicar to claim industrial injury benefit following a funeral.

A week later, police were chasing a hearse which had terrified a town. More than 20 people in Tischenreuth, Bavaria, had reported a midnight encounter with the phantom undertakers. The hearse stopped in front of people out walking alone, and three men dressed in black would take out a coffin and slowly open it.

Another coffin opened a day or two later on a fast-moving lorry between Bujumbura and Gitega in Burundi. Five hitch-hikers leaped to their deaths in fright. It was, in fact, merely the co-driver waking up from his nap. He had closed the lid when it started to rain, and was unaware that anyone had been picked up.

(*Telegraph* 2 & 13 Feb; *News of the World* 10 Feb; *Post-Bulletin*, Rochester, MN 12 Feb 1980).

Two days later, London police towed away a loaded hearse from a funeral parlour in Holloway, and the funeral was delayed for an hour and a half. An embarrassed Scotland Yard apologised to the family of the bereaved.

Meanwhile in Brighton, Michigan, widow Mary Bates was suing the undertaker and coffin-maker, who buried her husband, for a million dollars because the body had fallen through the bottom of the coffin as it was being carried to the graveside. The body was "surrounded by rags, newspapers, shredded paper and what appeared to be pantyhose." Mrs Bates said she had a heart attack as a result.

The following week, workmen digging a trench to house electricity cables for rewiring the nave of Winchester Cathedral unearthed an ancient stone coffin believed to contain the remains of Bishop Walkelyn, who began the building of the Cathedral before his death in 1098. The crumbling bones were surrounded by a shroud and well-preserved boots were still on his feet. There had been digging in the area recently, and in the fourteenth century, so the wonder was why it had not been discovered earlier.

(*Telegraph* 14 & 22 Feb 1980.)

Tales of the Serpent

SNAKES too have slid into the news a lot lately. On New Year's

PHENOMENA

Day, a Durban court was told that an Alfa Romeo was totally screwed up after a snake had jumped into the engine in pursuit of a rat. The owner, Dr Ahmed Suleman, turned the ignition and prepared a snake and rat stew.

In February, Percy the python, the pride and joy of the Army and Navy pub in Brompton, Kent, was eaten by his dinner. He was given a tiny rodent — a gerbil — as a tasty treat. The landlord came back later to find Percy dead and gnawed by the gerbil. It was not known whether the gerbil had killed him in the first place. An official funeral was held for the 3-year-old snake, complete with black armbands and flowers. Mr Coles, the landlord, plans to replace him with a bird-eating spider.

On the day we learned about Percy from the *News of the World* (17 Feb), little Diane Stiles (18 months) chewed a nine-inch venomous black snake to death by teething on its head in her garden in Melbourne. A hospital check showed she had not been bitten back. (*Telegraph* 21 Jan & 19 Feb;

Omaha World Herald 20 Feb; *Australasian Express* 29 Feb 1980.)

Ten days later, Ursula Beckley, 36, of Long Island filed a 3.6 million dollar damage suit against a neighbourhood dairy store. On 19 October last, she had cracked some eggs to make an omlette, and a six-inch, greyish-black snake crawled out of the third one. She had gone into a state of shock, and became nauseous every time she saw an egg thereafter. Her attorney said: "I have been told that a snake of that size in an egg would have to have to come from a mother snake at least six feet long." Poisonous cotton-mouth snakes of that length have been found round the farm in Gainesville, Georgia, to where the eggs had been traced.

Meanwhile, patrol car KHN080 was back in service in Sydney, Australia, free from its deadly squatter — a three foot black snake. For two weeks the car had stood in Campbelltown police station with all the doors and hood open. Attempts to entice the snake out with dead mice and frogs

failed. Finally a cautious search located it in the spare tire compartment.

(*Schenectady Gazette*, NY & *Oakland Tribune* 28 Feb; *Miami Herald* & *New York Times* 29 Feb 1980.)

Quirks of Birth

HISTORY was made in March this year when a case of possible human parthogenesis was reported in America. The father-mother, a 47-year-old hermaphrodite in Ohio, dresses as a woman, and thinks of herself as a woman. But she has both male and female genitalia, and it is thought she could have fertilised herself/himself. Parthogenesis or not, the case is unique, for as Dr Thomas Tegencamp said: "This is the only instance in recorded medical history where a true hermaphrodite has become pregnant."

Of course, self-fertilisation is not unique in the animal kingdom. For instance, 27 species of parthogenetic lizards have been

identified, and biologists have recently spied 4 species of these lady lizards playing lesbian games in Arizona and Colorado.

(*News of the World* 9 Mar; *Mirror* 11 Mar; *Time* 18 Feb 1980.)

An even odder tale — of fertilisation by bullet — comes from the American Civil War. On 12 May 1863, at a battle near Vicksburg, a bullet passed through the scrotum of a Confederate soldier, blew away his left testicle, and landed up in the belly of a 17-year-old nurse in a nearby house. Nine months later she gave birth to an eight pound baby boy, with a bullet fragment in his body. The girl insisted she was a virgin, and her hymen proved to be intact. The doctor concluded that the bullet had picked up some sperm and then penetrated the girl's ovary. The soldier, who had recovered, met the young mother, they fell in love, married, and had two more children. All this according to an 1874 article in the *American Medical Weekly*, retold in the *National Enquirer* (4 Dec 1979).

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UFO Review. The first UFO newspaper from USA. 70p. Stebbing, 41 Terminus Drive, Herne Bay, Kent.

BRITISH UFO SOCIETY — research, investigation, newsletter, photos, meetings, skywatches. Details, sae: 47 Belsize Square, London NW3.

HARMONY HEALING through "ONE-NESS". Matthew-Manning, Charles Bullen, Win Wood. Direct or Distant. Strictly by appointment only — apply: Secretary, Flat 3, The Grange, Brand Hill, Woodhouse Eaves, Loughborough LE12 8ST. (12 ½p stamp for reply, please). Tel: 0509 890782.

THE second London International UFO Congress will be held May 24/25 1981. Send SAE for details from BUFORA to 6 Cairn Avenue, London, W5 5HX.

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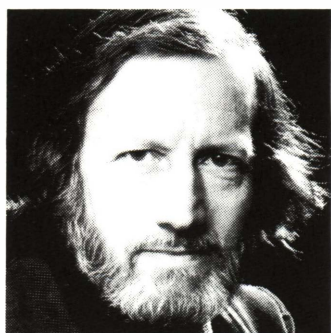
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BOOKS



Edited by Hilary Evans, author and Society for Physical Research member.

BOOKS about the paranormal are probably more varied than on any other subject. On my shelves they range from James I's *Daemonologie* to Miss Houghton's *Evenings at Home in Spiritual Seance*, from Esdaile on *Mesmerism* to Dione's claim that *God Drives a Flying Saucer*.

Faced with such a diversity of material, what guidelines should one follow? One thing I'm sure of: it's important to read at least some of the bad books as well as the good. Not only because the bad ones help to show how good the good ones are, but also because they give you some idea of what is being written — and read — by others.

I find it helpful to remember, while struggling with the tough-minded logic of the French intellectual avant-garde writers on ufology (I'm sure they think of it as '*la nouvelle ovniologie*') that others derive their UFO knowledge from the Dell comic books ('*Holy cow, you guys... look up there! It's a FLYING SAUCER!!!*'). Both in their way are part of the total picture.

The books reviewed in *Alpha* are mostly of positive value, adding in some degree to your understanding of the paranormal. But now and again we discuss books whose very badness is significant — where slipshod research understanding of the paranormal. But now and again we discuss books whose very badness is significant — where slipshod research, sloppy thinking or sheer sensationalism come between the reader and the subject. However, contrary to prevailing belief, such books are very much in the minority. The greater number of books on the paranormal are sensible and sincere, if not always scientific: nearly all have something helpful to say — there is very little outright rubbish.

Most of the books mentioned here are new ones. But is is salutary to remember that in some fields, nothing has replaced earlier writings. Thurston's *Physical*

Phenomena of Mysticism remains the definitive book in its field: heaven knows why this brilliant work has not been reprinted — you'll need to get it from the library unless you're lucky enough to find it secondhand.

Again, Myers' *Human Personality* is known to most, and rightly; but have you read his colleague Frank Podmore's superb *Studies in Psychical Research* of 1897, which so lucidly expresses the viewpoint of sympathetic sceptic — true scepticism, not the uninformed denigration which today so often passes under that label?

A new publication, Society for Psychical Research Study Guide 4: *Books on the Paranormal*, comprises an introductory reading list compiled by the SPR's Librarian, Nicholas Clark-Lowes, with the help of experts in respective fields. I have arranged for this to be made available to *Alpha* readers at the members' price of £1.20 + 15p postage. It is a brief but authoritative guide to the best that has been written on subjects ranging from altered states of consciousness to UFOs, and provides a sound introduction to each specific field of interest.

Send your cheque for £1.35, mentioning *Alpha* to SPR Publications, 1 Adam & Eve Mews, London W8 6UG. Nicholas Clark-Lowes and I are always ready to answer book queries from *Alpha* readers: but if you write, please enclose s.a.e.

THE UFO HANDBOOK

Allan Hendry
Doubleday/Dolphin (Obtainable from Watkins, 19 Cecil Court WC2, £5.55)

THERE cannot be a single best book on UFOs, because there are so many different ways of approaching this complex phenomenon, each with its own value. But Hendry's *Handbook* is unquestionably among the top five: a book which everyone who has a serious interest in the subject will want to possess, and will refer to time and again.

And yet its first impact is that of a cold shower. Fond illusions are shattered, hopes dismissed. Page by page Hendry seems to concede ground to the sceptics, until we wonder whether he will leave us any genuine UFOs to own a handbook about. But gradually we realise that the ground he is yielding is the dubious territory of those marginal cases which provide such easy sport for the sceptic. What is left, 300 incisive pages later, is the UFO phenomenon trimmed of much of its clutter, all signal and a minimum of noise.

It's not a perfect book, by any

means. As so often with American books, there is no index — essential, you'd have thought, in a reference book of this sort? The bibliography is uneven and would have been more helpful if accompanied by comment: many important books are not listed — only one Keel and one Vallee is included!

Again, as with so much of the American literature, one is left with the impression that the Americans regard UFOs as an American rather than a global phenomenon. There is no reference on the one hand to the valuable contribution of British investigators which has resulted in such excellent work as BUFORA's admirable *Vehicle Interference Project* catalogue. On the other, we get scarcely a nod in the direction of the French ufologists: even if there had been an index, I doubt if we'd have seen Vieroudy, Meheust or Monnerie listed, though all three have made uniquely valuable contributions to our understanding of the problem, at least as important as any American theorist.

These comments point up the book's major limitation: like virtually all American contributions to ufology, it's so close to the problem that it can't stand back and take an overview. Consequently it seems immature, a little naive, compared with much that is being done on this side of the Atlantic — John Rimmer's consistently thought-provoking journal *Magonia*, for example, or the Randles/Warrington *UFOs — a British Viewpoint*.

I have devoted most of this review to the shortcomings of the Hendry book, but only that you should be under no illusion that it is the comprehensive survey we're all waiting for. It is not: but at the same time it is a very important book, and an essential item for every ufologist's bookshelf. Its unblinking appraisal of the facts, its no-nonsense approach, its sound thinking and lucid writing, all combine to set a new standard for self-criticism in the field.

From the same stable comes the *Journal of UFO Studies*, a twice-a-year book-length compilation of scientific articles. To judge by the first issue, this is the high-level scientific UFO compilation that ufology has long lacked, and required reading for all with a serious interest in the subject. I particularly welcome Lawson's presentation of his crucially-important hypnotically-induced-abduction-scenario experiment, to my mind one of the most revealing parapsychological experiments of our time, with implications far wider than ufology. This is the sort of periodical which can play an

important part in gathering together information and studies which might otherwise be inaccessible, and I strongly recommend you to subscribe. Well worth the annual subscription of \$11 (including airmail postage) from Center for UFO Studies, 1609 Sherman Ave., Room 207, Evanston, Illinois 60201.

While I'm about it, the address for the BUFORA *Vehicle Interference Project* is Bufora Publications, 16 Southway, Burgess Hill, Sussex RH15 9ST: price £3.50 (£2.50 to BUFORA members). The address for *Magonia* is 64 Alric Avenue, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4JW: your subscription of £1.75 — hardly more than a round of drinks — brings you four issues of enlightened comment on the UFO phenomenon which is consistently perceptive and often brilliantly ahead of the rest of the field.

H.E.

FUTURE TENSE: A Prophetic Consensus for the Eighties Pendulum Publishing Company £1.50

THIS booklet, compiled by Francis Kinsman, the well known futurologist, describing the results of interviews with fifteen respondents known for their standing as psychics, using a variety of disciplines such as astrology, numerology and mediumship, is a fascinating document which should be read by politicians, business leaders and others.

The art of divination has a long and somewhat chequered history. The futurologist of today, using various forms of sampling and interview techniques, is directly descended from the tradition of the court astrologers of the ancient world. The interest of this study lies as much in the actual predictions as in the method employed, known as TAROT (Trend Analysis of Relative Opinion Testing), derived by Francis Kinsman from the well established Delphi forecasting method pioneered by the Rand Corporation in the 1960's.

Most readers will be concerned with the actual predictions, which are remarkable for their detail and preciseness. In this connection it is interesting that two major predictions have already been fully and partly verified; namely, the re-election of Indira Gandhi and the latest reports of a new large North Sea oil reserve confirm the comments on Britain's energy resources.

However, I would like to see more information given on the methodology. Francis Kinsman describes the second phrase of the

BOOKS

compilation of the unified report by saying, "From these interviews a common statement was drafted and then sent back to the participants in September for comment in the light of what they felt *intuitively*, rather than by how they reacted mentally or emotionally to the content." It is this particular stage of the methodology that raises most questions.

How many recipients of such a statement would be able to shut off and completely exclude their mental and emotional processes? What of the effect of reading other predictions, reports and even the latest newspaper? I do not believe that at this stage of our understanding and use of insight skills that we can fail not to be significantly influenced by extraneous factors. This is the biggest criticism that can be levelled at the method. Indeed, it is possible to argue with considerable plausibility that if a control group of another fifteen persons had been used, taken at random from various walks of life, the result might not have been very different.

However, this criticism must not be taken as in any way denigrating what has been done. This attempt to formulate a consensus of prophetic claims by the objective evaluation of intuitive responses may be as significant as the early work of J. B. Rhine.

It is another example of open minded research trying to come to grips with some of the more intangible aspects of human experience. All attempts of this kind must be encouraged, as they can only lead, in the long term, to an increase in our understanding of the nature of man and the world he inhabits.

In the final resort, the real test will be the extent to which the specific forecasts actually happen. It is in this respect that I would like to see *Alpha* take the lead by approaching Francis Kinsman with the suggestion that a panel of evaluators should be set up comprising persons drawn from such specific fields as business and politics and that their task should be to devise agreed criteria against which each prediction can be evaluated. Particularly, the degree of accuracy of fulfilment of each event.

It would also be interesting if the panel could do the same for the other scenarios derived from a different mix of persons. This would establish some comparative criteria against which the predictions of the sensitives could be compared.

Hugh Marlow

(*Future Tense* is available direct from Pendulum Publishing

Company, 20 Regent Street, Fleet, Hants. GU13 9NR £1.70 including P&P.)

RESEARCHES ON THE I CHING
Iulian K Shchutskii
Routledge & Kegan Paul £6.95

THE HANDBOOK OF CHINESE HOROSCOPES
Theodora Lau
Souvenir £5.95

A RUSSIAN book on the I Ching? Well, look at the map, and you'll see that more Russians live close to China than to Europe. But isn't there an unbridgeable gulf between Marxist dialectic and oriental fortune telling? Then you won't be surprised to learn that Shchutskii died in a Siberian prison camp, battered to death with a chain.

His book is for the serious student rather than the dabbler; but you wouldn't need to believe in horoscopy to be intrigued. The researches range widely, culminating in chapters which set the bafflingly complex *Book of Changes* in its philosophical and literary context. Though never descending from its scholarly level, the writing comes lucidly through this translation whose civilised tone is matched by Routledge's customary elegant printing, encouraging one, in the words of Ou-yang Hsiu quoted here: . . . *On this endless day to give oneself up to the zither and wine, To light the incense and read The Book of Changes in late spring . . .*

Theodora Lau's book, though pitched at a lower level than Shchutskii's, is very decently presented by Souvenir and is great fun. With such books the reader naturally turns to the bit about oneself: as an Earth Snake I found myself described as 'principled and reliable, able to communicate with the public yet refusing to be influenced by the crowd'.

I counterchecked by pretending I was a Horse: my true reading certainly seemed the better match. On the other hand, my Earth Rat of a wife didn't seem to fit her birthday at all except that they'd spotted her fondness for buying things she doesn't really need. But as for me, 'immensely charming, graceful and enchanting' . . . yes, I can cheerfully commend this book to anyone who wants a change from boring old Western-style horoscopy.

H.E.

THE EARTHQUAKE GENERATION: a psychic-scientific prediction.
Jeffery Goodman
Turnstone Books £3.25

JEFFERY Goodman had always thought it unfortunate that a geologist had never had the chance to question the entranced Cayce about his predicted earth changes.

So here is Goodman, a geologist as well as an archaeologist, setting up a project where he can really put the psychically obtained information to the test.

The predictions are given very precisely, complete with maps. They are grouped together covering a number of years in each case, but it is pointed out that there is a certain pattern involved and once a certain prediction has been fulfilled, then other events will follow.

If you have been trying to gather together all the predictions for the next twenty years when it comes to earth changes, then don't bother. Goodman has done it all for you. From Cayce to Nostradamus, from the Bible to the Book of the Hopi, from the Jupiter Effect to the role of the Tectonic Plates; it is all there. If only a small amount of all that is predicted were to come about, the effects could be catastrophic.

Jean Credland

BEYOND DEATH — THE GATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS
Stanislav and Christina Grof
Thames and Hudson 1980 £3.95

ZEN — DIRECT POINTING TO REALITY

Anne Bancroft
Thames and Hudson 1979 £3.95
TWO more beautifully illustrated book in the "Art and Imagination" series, and two very different approaches to the experience and exploration of reality.

From a story about Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of Zen, Anne Bancroft quotes "Depending upon nothing, you must find your own mind," and further on, "If you want the truth, cease running after things." Perhaps the Grofs, who spend much effort running after things with the help of science and induced experience, might benefit from this advice.

Of course, it is easier to write about an established system of knowledge like Zen, than to collate information about concepts of the afterlife from a vast range of cultures. In their attempt to provide details of confrontations with death during life, that may be useful when meeting death itself, the Grofs draw from their main sources, usefully supplementing the arguments with the picture-captions.

The first source is historical, eschatological material, including the Tibetan and Egyptian Books of the Dead. The second is reports of pseudo-fatal experiences, including ritual and shamanistic "death" encounters as well as more recent death-bed experiences. While I am surprised that the Spiritualist case has been so largely

ignored, there is considerable consistency apparent in all this material, which is drawn from widely disparate times and places.

The third source is what the authors title "Death and Rebirth in schizophrenia and psychedelic states," and it seems comparatively unconsidered. The nearest I have known to an LSD experient understanding death was a friend who nearly killed himself believing he could fly from a bridge. In an attempt to be radical, *Beyond Death* risks being dangerous.

Something of the nature of reality may be amenable to the sort of selfless observation and acceptance that is essential to Zen, and which is clearly explained in the text, the illustrations, and the very humour and manner of Zen; *Direct pointing to reality*.

Building from the experience and example of six great Zen patriarchs and masters, the reader is treated to a calm and attractive taste of Zen itself, wholly complemented by the illustrations. Zen is, we learn, direct experience. Few thought systems learn equally from beauty and absurdity; what an excellent example this gives experience involving so much of both.

Kevin McClure

THE HOUSE OF LORDS UFO DEBATE
Open Head Press/
Pentacle Books 1979 £2.95

COPIES of Hansard costing 40p, containing the official transcript of the debate in the House of Lords on 18 January 1979 sold out very quickly. The debate initiated by the Earl fo Clancarty attracted world-wide interest and author John Michell has pasted up the respective pages of Hansard, adding biographical notes, annotations and illustrations. While some of the notes are of an elementary nature "Several notorious fakes continue to do the rounds in UFO publications . . ." there are useful references to dates and places. Also of interest was the inclusion of the dubious 'official' list of alleged UFO contacts, referred to by Lord Kimberley, one of the abler contributors to the debate. Altogether some 14 members of the Lords contributed and two scientists, Lord Kings Norton and Lord Halsbury were amongst them.

Lord Clancarty has contributed both an introductory preface and an 'afterword' noting the establishment on 19 June 1979, of a "House of Lords All Party UFO Study Group". The book is a solidly produced paperback of over 100 pages, and forms a useful record of the Lords Parliamentary Debate.

Lionel Beer

LETTERS

Gooch versus Randi

IN issue No. 7 of *Alpha* Gooch thinks that Randi should divide his \$10,000 with certain people whose psychic abilities have been "conclusively demonstrated" and that he must accept this view since he is not qualified to question or supervise any of the matters involved. "Pay up or shut up" says Gooch.

I have an idea that Randi will not oblige and maybe his opponent would like to know why, although he cannot know very much about the subject if he cannot guess the reason. That reason is that Randi and I do not believe the stories that the parapsychologists tell us and we have not much faith in the conduct of their experiments. Moreover, their attitude to truth leaves much to be desired.

Not so very long ago, certain statements were published which were shown to be without foundation but which, when challenged, were airily brushed aside as matters of verbal interpretation. How does Gooch know that in the cases he cites the statistical work did not perhaps contain a few errors which, if discovered — as in the recent Soal scandal — might have altered the conclusions? Randi, I think, wants to be sure: Gooch just believes what he is told.

For all Randi and I know, these experiments may have been as faultless as Gooch thinks they were but our experiences with parapsychologists, their regard for truth and the competence they display in their activities make us both somewhat wary in dealing with them. No, Mr Gooch, you must do better than that.

Let me give a couple of examples of why Randi and I have a somewhat poor opinion of their competence in matters which require just a modicum of knowledge and care. In a recent index to a volume of the *SPR Journal*, some of the entries were not in alphabetical order, first names preceded surnames and one entry which might have been considered of some importance was omitted altogether, namely "Society for Psychical Research".

Again, only this year, the *SPR* issued an advertising sheet in which they could not even give one of their most illustrious past presidents his correct title. They called him "Sir Gilbert Murray" although he was neither a Knight nor a Baronet. Similarly, in the same sheet, it was apparently too much trouble to spell A. R. Wallace's name correctly.

Yet these are the kind of people whose "experiments" Randi must accept without the most rigorous scrutiny. Believe all you want, Mr Gooch, but do not ask my friend

Randi and me to join you. We were not born yesterday. — *Eric J. Dingwall, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex.*

Unclaimed prize

UNDER the title, "Pay up or shut up," Stan Gooch has demanded that I pay over my \$10,000 prize to a group of researchers who in his opinion have "conclusively demonstrated on several occasions" the reality of psychic healing. Failing that, he suggests that I exclude psychic healing from my public challenge. Gooch is, as usual, presumptuous in his statements and demands.

First, I have no intention of excluding these claims from my offer. To do so would amount to an admission that these powers exist, and I am not prepared to admit this at all. Knowing the accuracy of the reporting involved in the general run of parapsychological claims, the deception often employed and the omission of pertinent data, I am not in any way required to accept the Soal claims, the Levy research or the Cyril Burt deceptions as well.

Psychic healing is just as loaded with already-revealed lies, tricks and mistakes as other facets of psi "research". Olga Worrall, in the USA, was highly touted recently for having done miracles in very well controlled conditions, causing certain bacteria cultures to flourish or to perish as a result of her "psychic healing" powers. After the press had adequately promoted these wonders, it was discovered that no such experiments had ever taken place at the labs named, that persons said to have officiated did not in fact exist, and that no records exist of any such experiments.

Says Gooch, "In terms of design, execution and statistical analysis these experiments are faultless . . ." referring to those conducted by the persons to whom I am told I must surrender my \$10,000 prize. Perhaps. But Mr. Gooch must realize that when it is *his* prize money involved, *he* can make the rules. I make my own rules — quite reasonable and direct — to govern my own offer. You see, when Bernard Lovell is operating the Jodrell Bank telescope, I need not be present in order to have good reason to believe the reports he makes. One reason is that Lovell is a member of an accepted and well-tested scientific community, practising a legitimate science. Another is that the claims he makes are not outside the sphere of normally accepted observations. But, if Dr Lovell claims that he sees blue dragons on the moon through the Jodrell Bank

telescope, and claims that he now wants my prize money, I think I am required by good common sense to ask to peek through the eyepiece (or examine the antenna, or whatever else is needed) before paying out the money.

I would not have paid Soal without being present . . .

Another, and more important point, is that Gooch attempts to put words in my mouth that I have never intended to be there. He says, "Randi has no standing whatsoever in respect of purely medical experiments" and in that he is quite correct. But I have never claimed that, Mr. Gooch. In examining claims outside of my field of expertise, I have a number of experts upon whom I may call to ask advice. In examining psychic healing, I certainly would call upon those persons, and in the past, I have done so.

Gooch tells me that I have "only one recourse" concerning the experiments he considers. He says that I have to claim that the experimenters are incompetent or fraudulent. Nonsense. He puts me in the position of answering the question, "Do you still beat your wife?" I will thank him to refrain from making my statements for me. Already, he is suggesting that the individuals concerned sue me for statements I have never made. This is a juvenile approach certainly below Mr. Gooch's reputation.

Furthermore, Gooch says, "Randi always demands that he supervise any experiment and that he be present when it is conducted." Again, more nonsense from Mr. Gooch. I have never made such a statement. All I have ever insisted upon is that where claim is made on my \$10,000 prize, I insist that I am either present or adequately represented. Is that too much to ask, Mr. Gooch? Perhaps you are more lenient with your bank account than I can afford to be.

My money is there, available for anyone who can claim it. Over 450 persons have applied to do so, in the last 15 years. Some 55 have reached the point of passing preliminary tests. All have failed and no one can point to one where I have not conducted a perfectly fair, agreed-to test that showed anything but simple trickery or genuine self-deception. I intend that this record continue to stand, and I am prepared to offer the prize until it is won — if ever.

Let the researchers lay claim to the \$10,000, and let them allow me to witness the miracles at work. I have *never* had any of the scientists mentioned by Gooch claim my prize. I await with interest any response . . .

James Randi

Useless Efforts

WHILE I am in complete agreement with Sam Gooch's criticism of James Randi I consider that any attempt to make J.R. admit that he may be mistaken is useless. After all he has himself witnessed demonstrations of the paranormal and there are countless records of tests undertaken by scientists of worldwide repute.

*Miss E. M. Wood,
Sidmouth, Devon*

Experiment is wrong

I ENJOY Stan Gooch's writing very much — he is one of the most creative thinkers in parapsychology today. But I am saddened by his enthusiasm for vivisection as a way of investigating paranormal healing. Several hundred mice, he tells us, were deliberately injured so that Oskar Estebany could demonstrate his healing powers.

Vivisection was developed by the science of the 19th century, which tended to regard living things as pieces of machinery. This approach has produced some wonderful results, but at a terrible price in suffering and in the loss of a wider vision.

Parapsychology and psychic healing are surely "New Age" sciences and should have no place for these methods. If researchers really want to prove that psychic healing works, they can gather enough data in the field — that is, in healers' clinics. No true healer ought to allow living creatures to be tortured just for the sake of an "elegant" experiment.

*Derek Greatrex, Caversham,
Reading, Berks.*

Terrified of the truth

MAY I express my utmost gratitude to Stan Gooch for his "Open letter to *Alpha*" (No. 7 issue) in which he takes that meddlesome pest James Randi to task in so firm and effective a manner.

Such a superb ticking off has long been overdue, so it was good that someone of Mr Gooch's brilliance should be the one to put Randi just where he belongs — in the reject bin.

I would gladly echo Stan Gooch's directive to "Pay up or shut up", along with any others who are equally stunned at the utter contempt with which Randi constantly dismisses the achievements of certain psychically gifted people, and the harmful publicity to which they have been subjected over the years.

Like Stan Gooch, I too love the truth. But I believe that Randi and

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those of his ilk are terrified of it.
— *Marjorie Butterworth, Harlow, Essex.*

Drink problems

IN MY article "Are you at risk?" (*Alpha* No 5) I referred to the strain of mediumship sometimes leading to alcoholism. *Psychic News* of 1 December asked for evidence. For the mediums I named, here it is.

For Arthur Ford see his autobiography "Unknown but known" published by Psychic Press, and the posthumous biography of Rauscher & Spraggett "Arthur Ford the Man who talked with the Dead". For Sinton Moses, see the discussion of him in Podmore's "Modern Spiritualism". Podmore had known Moses for many years, as did the other SPR pioneers; no one repudiated Podmore's restrained allusion to the medium's drink problem.

References to Helen Duncan and drink appear in some of the archives of the many psychic groups with whom she so tragically interacted. But if anyone who remembers her would like to state that her drinking was temperate and had no ill effects on her health, I would welcome their testimony.

For living mediums, unless they have publicly admitted a drink problem, it is usually not possible, for legal reasons, for journals to name them. But I would not wish to intrude on their illness anyway.

For Margery Crandon, see Thomas Tietze's biography "Margery". It will be noticed that physical mediums seem especially vulnerable, and it is probable that drink is less a problem among mediums today than before the war.

In that remarkable and neglected Spiritualist novel *The Land of the Mist* by Conan Doyle, there is a defence of mediums and drink. "There is no doubt", says one character, Smith, "that Banderby is the strongest physical medium in England. But we all know what his personal character is. You could not rely upon him." Another journalist asks why. Smith raised a glass to his lips. "He has gone the way that many a medium has gone before him."

Smith goes on to explain that this does not discredit all mediumship and Spiritualism; that poetry is still good though some poets were not, and that mediumship is like genius and some fall. "The excuse for them is great. They practise a most exhausting profession and stimulants are needed. Then they lose control. But their physical mediumship carries on all the

same." An amusing anecdote follows to illustrate this, in which a guide remonstrates with a drunken medium through the trumpet:

The character Smith, is the editor of a weekly psychic newspaper.

His defence is surely more effective than the PN alternative of treating an allusion to this subject as improper. The matter was serious enough for Doyle to deal with, and despite my own belief in Spiritualism and mediumship, I do not think it can be omitted in a review of the possible dangers.

Leslie Price

The Geller miracles

I ENCOURAGE readers to do just what Dr Harold Puthoff has suggested — ask for a copy of his "Fact Sheet" of rebuttals. Then compare these claims, made by Puthoff & Targ in response to my book, *The Magic of Uri Geller*, to a detailed counter-rebuttal in my forthcoming book, *Flim-Flam, The Truth about Unicorns, Parapsychology & Other Delusions*. The truth is soon made evident.

I have now been informed by Dr Puthoff that the reference he made in the *Scientific American* letter was not to Geller and metal-bending, but to an even more hilarious event, namely, Ingo Swann's Encounter of the Worst Kind with a magnetometer. I have discovered the truth behind this fiasco, as well, and it will be told in *Flim-Flam*. By denying the connection with the Geller miracles, Puthoff has endorsed even more horrendous pseudoscience.

I gladly admit that I now accept Dr Puthoff's support of the Swann flummery as corresponding to the S.A. reference, rather than that it concerned the Geller matter. But remember, he admits it freely, and has described the Swann/magnetometer affair as, "carefully verified" and "well-documented." He must stand by that description, and I will hold him to it, you may be sure.

James Randi

Tribute

THERE WAS something especially good about issue Number 7 and I think perhaps it had something to do with the quality of the articles within its pages.

Take for instance Stan Gooch's open letter to *Alpha*! In it he proposed a change in experimental procedures which would (hopefully) avoid the boredom which produces the so-called decline effect. I have observed this effect in experiments of my own and the answer to it seems so easy

that one wonders why no-one thought of it before. Perhaps it needed someone to make the statement "The statistical chance probabilities involved are exactly the same whether one subject is tested a hundred times or a hundred subjects are tested once each".

Another article I liked was "Beyond the Limits of Science" by Graham Lawrence. The question posed by Mr Lawrence basically is what constitutes proof? (or what kind of proof do the hard line sceptics really want?) If a physicist makes the statement that a one centimetre cube will displace one cc of water, unless I perform the experiment myself I can legitimately refuse to believe it. But the statement is logical enough to be accepted without experimentation and, if necessary, the experiment is easy to perform. But as far as the paranormal is concerned, this is not so easy to accept, despite the mounting weight of evidence, nor is experimentation so easy to perform. We don't know quite what we are looking for and we don't really know where to look. But that there is something worth looking for has, I believe, been more than adequately demonstrated.

B. R. Oldham, Nottingham

It's a delusion

INTERESTING though the theory of Walter Langbein is — "Genes and Genesis" (*Alpha* No. 6), it stumbles headlong into the same pitfall as von Däniken and his predecessors.

Modern man suffers from a serious delusion: that in some way he is apart from Nature — a delusion that has spawned the entire mechanistic world view that has given us ancient astronauts, UFOs, and their ilk. Some views proposed nowadays almost imply that the claimants have no awareness of what could broadly be termed natural processes.

Pure science will get us nowhere, just as pure religion/mysticism will not either. The answer is more likely to lie in a fusion of the two.

That "Elohim" is plural is nothing new: it was pointed out at least 20 years ago. "Ancient astronauts may be one explanation, but by no means the only one to fit the evidence.

Things which come down from the sky need not be limited to spaceships filled with intergalactic tourists in search of apes to play with on the beach of evolution. There is the deluge of cosmic radiations, capable of an equally marked effect on genes, as Carl Sagan has speculated in *The Cosmic Connection*. That at least

puts man back in the fold of Nature, which has a more homely feel.

The new translation of "rib" as "source of life" is interesting, but is the gene the source of life? It contains a code which determines the form of that life, but is hardly the source of life itself. The nature of the source of life leads it to one of the great philosophical questions but such answers as we have would suggest the soul.

There are legends of times when humans were androgynous, and semi-ethereal, until the gods decided to divide these beings, to create the two sexes (see for example, Plato, Symposium, 189e-193c).

In The Koran (4:1) we read: "Your Lord created you from a single soul. From that soul he created its mate and through them bestrewed the earth with many men and women."

In his searching, there may have been times when man has been too mystical. In today's world he may equally be too scientific. — *Chris Hall, Fleet, Hants.*

Beyond the fringe

IF *Alpha* is to be of continuing interest and value to those on the fringe of serious research and NOT to the already converted, then areas of publicity devoted to such spiritual organisations as The Wrekin Trust and exponents of gobbledy gook who happily trot out meaningless phrases such as 'visions of wholeness, an apprehension of the essential unity of all life' should be omitted, or rationalised.

Re Borley. Just to put the record completely straight I am glad that Peter Underwood confirms that the Borley tapes are not of a paranormal nature, but I would point out that I met Hugh Burnett, the producer of the TV programme, at the initial stages of the planning of the feature. In our discussion I suggested names of individuals and sites which might be worth including, though admittedly I had nothing to do with the final decision and I never claimed that I had.

Andrew M. Green, President, Borderline Science Investigation Group, Robertsbridge, Sussex

Theology and life elsewhere

I AM enjoying *Alpha* and commending it where I can. You seem to me to have just the right blend of open-mindedness and critical acumen. Long may you last!

Three cheers for Jack Jennings ("Visitors from heaven", *Alpha* No. 6)! Of course the theologians ought to be thinking about the

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implications if man is not alone in the Universe. He's right that not many have — but he might have mentioned Dr Eric Mascall who 25 years ago was delivering the Bampton Lectures in Oxford on *Christian Theology and Natural Science* (published by Longmans in 1956), saying that the discoveries of modern science should be highly stimulating to theology, and speculating on the theological consequences of finding life elsewhere in the Universe. Let me give a quote or two:

"If redeemed men are all one man in the Word-made-man, we may expect that redeemed Martians (if there are Martians and they are not human) will be all one Martian in the Word-made-Martian (p. 42).

"I cannot see any conclusive theological objection to the view that the divine Word may have become incarnate in other rational species than our own (p. 44). How wide is the liberty that Christian orthodoxy leaves to intellectual speculation (p. 45)."

So, *Alpha*, keep up the speculation, and keep our theologians at it!

Michael Perry, Archdeacon of Durham, editor of *The Christian Parapsychologist*.

Prophetic correction

THERE IS a small point concerning the prophecy of Mother Shipton which I feel should be clarified.

Originally, in the November/December issue Mother Shipton was quoted as prophesying, "World to an end will come in nineteen hundred and eighty one."

In the March/April issue reader A. D. Davidge quoted from the book *The Life and Prophecies of Ursula Sontheil* (Mother Shipton), that the prophecy should have read: "The world then to an end will come in nineteen hundred and ninety one." However, according to Patricia Crowther in her book *Witchcraft in Yorkshire* (Dalesman, 1973) page 44, the original prophecy read: "'The world then to an end shall come, in eighteen hundred and ninety-one.' (To save her face, some modern publications of her prophecies have altered the date to 1991)."

Even more discouraging to believers of Mother Shipton's prophecies must be the small section about her in the Readers Digest Book *Folklore, Myths and Legends of Britain* (1977), p. 348, which states: "Most of the prophecies ascribed to her, such as her predictions of trains and the telegraph, are now known to have been written by a man named Tindley in 1871." (!) Enough said?

Immediately following the Mother Shipton verse in the

November/December issue you added:

"Scientists warn that 1982's planetary alignment could impose disastrous strains on the earth."

This point has been discussed by Patrick Moore and others on BBC television who assure us that the alignment will have no effect on us whatsoever — never mind "disastrous effects on earth". Besides, similar alignments have occurred in the past and did not herald any significant change in man's history or any change in the earth's geography, for that matter.

I am sure many readers will remember the peculiar superstitious behaviour of many primitive peoples when the recent solar eclipse occurred — does the planetary alignment and fear of its supposed effects not fall within the same category?

Congratulations to the *Alpha* team for producing such an excellent magazine.

J. Drever, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Kirlian photography

BRIAN Snellgrove's comments on my article 'An Open Letter to *Alpha*' (*Alpha* 7) are not useful. He states that Professor Tiller's investigation of the Kirlian aura phenomenon are 'ten years old'. Tiller's reports appeared in *Psychic* in 1974 and the *New Scientist* in 1974. By my arithmetic this is six years ago.

But the point is that in the intervening six (or ten) years nobody has yet been able to refute Tiller's results — which show, I repeat, that all Kirlian photographs are accidental by-products of the electrical apparatus itself, having nothing to do with states of mind or body of any organism. The same results can easily be obtained using a metal coin instead of a hand or a leaf.

The case is (in my opinion) that a gifted intuitive or psychic (but not just anybody) can work on a Kirlian photograph in very much the same way as psychics can on a shake of tea-leaves, a spread of playing cards or a crystal ball. These procedures somehow harness the psychic-intuitive faculty. But science is in no way involved. What is involved is something called 'the paranormal' — and we don't know what that is.

When progressives claim a process to be 'scientific', which they frequently do, they do not usually understand what the claim means, and can only mean. It must mean that anybody following the same procedures, down to the letter, must get the same results as everybody else, down to the letter.

Such is emphatically not the case with the Kirlian phenomenon — except in the defeating sense that by strictly monitoring just the apparatus itself, you can get the same photograph a thousand times out of a thousand — even if you 'photograph' a thousand different objects or organisms!

Perhaps the most useful next step now would be not further comment back and forth between Snellgrove and myself, but an appeal to Professor Tiller to report, in *Alpha*, his own most recent thoughts and findings.

Stan Gooch, London

Dead-end for electromagneticism

DR ROBINS' views in *Alpha* No.6 on the possible role of electromagnetism in paranormal phenomena are characteristically honest and objective, but I do not feel they represent any real advance on Prof Taylor's earlier theories. Regardless of energy levels there is no niche in the electromagnetic spectrum into which such phenomena may be fitted.

In addition to this, the high information content involved, for example, in the transmission of telepathic symbols would entail biological analogues of highly sophisticated electronic circuits. I have not seen it suggested that such analogues exist. In any case, as Dr Robins acknowledges, certain phenomena such as map-dowsing come into a special category "seemingly independent of both distance and time." This rules out electromagnetism completely and there seems little point in trying to retain it for limited applications. Why strain at a gnat while an elephant is waiting to be swallowed? The scientific oesophagus might as well be redesigned first as last!

One gets the impression from Dr Robins' article that he himself is beginning to appreciate the need for an eclectic approach to the problem. Thus, while he hopes that a model will be constructed to account for phenomena "within the conventional macroscopic framework", elsewhere he talks of precognition being "at odds with macroscopic physics" — thus tacitly acknowledging that no satisfactory model will be constructed.

The doubt revealed here is attested by his further remark: "I would suggest that there is an explanation... which we may one day approach, if not finally understand."

If we do not finally understand it, it will hardly be an explanation. The crux of the matter is that many

scientists — even those of Dr Robins' calibre (his article on the Rollright phenomena was among *Alpha*'s best to date) still tend to believe that all phenomena must eventually be explicable in cause-and-effect terms.

In at least one branch of science, however, that of atomic physics, cause and effect have largely ceased to have any meaning. Bronowski acknowledged their breakdown and said: "We are looking for another such universal concept to unify and enlighten our world."

Niels Bohr, the great Danish atomic physicist, gave a tacit lead when he introduced his 'Principle of Complementarity' to resolve the 'wave-particle paradox'. This principle has so far been applied only in fairly limited ways. I think, however, that it is a principle which underlies all the manifold phenomena of the universe. The physical and the paranormal are two faces of the same coin — neither of them explicable in the other's terms. Any viable theoretical framework of the future will be not conventional but composite.

Wolfgang Pauli, Nobel Prize-winning originator of the Exclusion Principle, said: "Further developments will correct the previous one-sided orientation and will move towards a unitary world-view in which science is only a part in the whole."

The argument for such a composite framework is supported by such apparent anomalies as the pre-dawn aspect of the Takata Reaction (concerned with menstrual cycles) and even more significantly by a similar time-displacement phenomenon noted at Rollright by Dr. Robins himself.

The theory is complex and one cannot develop it adequately within the limitations of a letter. Sadly for those scientists, however, who, like Alice's White Knight, try to 'madly squeeze a right-hand foot into a left-hand shoe', any theory likely to develop will have a pronounced limp.

Edgar A. Tooke

We should like to thank all those readers who have written to *Alpha*.

The editors reserve the right to cut or edit letters unless readers specify that their correspondence must be published in full, or not at all.

Unfortunately, we are unable to send a personal acknowledgement to each correspondent. But every letter is read and its contents noted.

Those readers who do want a reply are asked to send a stamped, addressed envelope.

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